

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.]

[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 687.—VOL. XXVII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JULY 1, 1876.

[PRICE ONE PENNY]



[THE GREEN EYED MONSTER.]

BASIL RIVINGTON'S ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mark'd you her face and did not there
Sense, softness, sweetness—all appear?
Mark'd you her form and saw not you
A heart and mind as lovely too?
And felt you not as I now feel
Delight no tongue could e'er reveal.

THE month for which Ida Colville had been engaged at the "Nymphs' Resort" slipped by; the favour with which the audience had regarded her on the night of her debut increased rather than diminished.

She was a greater success than Lizzie Chub had ever been, and as Mr. Caution was fully aware of this fact he had determined to retain her, although he had determined to pay her as little as possible.

The trembling fear with which Ida had first appeared wore off, and as the nights went on she faced the crowd of human beings which nightly filled the hall with the calm indifference of one who knew her own power to please.

The cheers, the clapping and the encores fell on almost unheeding ears: she had taken up the life, she must go on with it, but she hated it, and even success could not give her unalloyed joy.

On the morning before her engagement expired, she called by appointment on Mr. Caution; that worthy (?) man received her with every mark of respect and attention. It was a characteristic trait of his nature that those whom he could not oppress he flattered.

After some rather fulsome compliments, paid for the express purpose of putting Ida in a good humour, the manager bethought himself of business.

"Ahem, I need hardly ask, Miss Loville, whether

you intend to stop with us; you would surely not disappoint your entranced patrons by tearing yourself from their admiring eyes."

Our heroine listened with barely concealed impatience.

"I have no intention of doing so, Mr. Caution, unless such be your wish."

"My wish? How could you wrong me by such a supposition. My wish, of course, is to retain you, only I am a poor man, mademoiselle, a very poor man, who can't afford exorbitant terms."

"Nor should I desire such."

She was forewarned.

Mrs. Chub had given her full particulars of the managerial meanness, and specially besought her to be on her guard.

Mr. Caution looked at Ida and coughed.

It was most aggravating. Without injuring himself he could have paid her a handsome salary. He had privately resolved not to go a farthing beyond eight guineas; but then, perhaps she would come for less. Why ever did she not name a price, and let him beat her down? In which he felt specially at home.

He resolved to begin with a small offer; he could easily increase it.

"Would five guineas a week content you?"

It sounded quite a little fortune to Ida; she was silent from very fear that if she accepted too readily he might change his mind.

Mr. Caution gave a gentle sigh, and continued sadly:

"Things are very dear, just now; this is an expensive undertaking to support, and the returns are small, very small; in fact, I am a poor man, Miss Loville."

She bowed; but for the importance of the issue she must have smiled at the pains he took to impress this fact upon her.

If frequent repetition assists memory she was not likely to forget it.

"Shall we say five—six guineas?" asked Mr. Caution, making a great effort.

His companion smiled, not the sweet, pathetic smile

of Ida Colville, but a pretty little conventional smile that Ada Loville often used.

"To oblige you, yes."

He disappeared to fetch a form of agreement, so that the contract might be concluded at once. She dropped the mask then, the forced smile faded from her lips, and she raised one hand heavily to her golden head, as though she felt a sudden pain. After all, of what avail was this hard struggle? Whom would her smiles benefit, save herself? To support the frail life she did not value she must adopt a profession distasteful and repugnant to herself; must appear nightly before a multitude of curious eyes; her voice, the voice that had best soothed her dying mother, that had been as sweetest music to Basil Rivington, must be sold for money, just like a chair or table, or any other marketable article. What would the Blankshire ladies say? In what set terms would Lady Fitz Charles express her scorn, and Mrs. Rice-Green her indignation. They and others of their degree had been contemptuous enough to the squire's adopted daughter; what would they be to the singer of the "Nymphs' Resort?"

Ida was growing weary of her life. She could have said with Fortia, "My little body is weary of this great world." She wearied of music, once her greatest delight; she wearied of her beauty, once her secret pride. What mattered it that her face was fairer than her fellows', her figure graceful, her smile sweet—who cared?

The manager was so long absent that she had ample time for these melancholy musings. The bright, careless Ada Loville fled away, and a lonely orphan, sad and weary, took her place.

A gentleman paying Mr. Caution a call on business was surprised to find so fair a face in the dingy office. Ida never heard his entrance, and Percy Harcourt, despite his low opinion of womankind, fell to watching her with great attention.

He had never seen Mr. Caution, and his object in visiting him was only to inquire for the particulars respecting some property he had seen advertised for sale.

Presently Ida looked up, and perceiving her surprise, Percy bowed with easy grace, and apologised for intruding on her solitude.

Miss Colville vanished at his words, and Ada Loville came back again.

"Not at all," with the little smile we have seen before. "I am only waiting for Mr. Caution, and this room is free to all his visitors."

Percy liked her clear, ringing voice, he liked her unaffected words. So he made some trifling remark, and they were soon engaged in lively conversation. Both were possessed of cultivated tastes and no ordinary degree of refinement.

For him the tête-à-tête had an unmixed charm. But even while he listened to his words, Ida was wondering whom he resembled, where she had seen his dark eyes before. And then came a bitter after-thought. Would he talk to her, with this pleasant deference, if he knew that she was only Mr. Caution's dependant, only Ada Loville, first soprano at the "Nymphs' Resort," advertised familiarly as "The Linnet of the North."

Still neither felt particularly glad when Mr. Caution returned. He bowed carelessly to the stranger, and then advanced to Ida.

"Miss Loville, a thousand pardons for keeping you thus; if you will sign your name here, I need not detain you longer."

She removed her glove, and Percy could see how the white hand trembled. She wrote her assumed name in the place pointed out by the manager, then, with a slight bow, she left the room.

Mr. Caution then turned blandly to his male visitor, and requested to know his business.

A somewhat lengthy interview ensued. Percy had risen to go, when he noticed a lady's black veil lying on the ground, picking it up, he handed it to the manager.

"Thank you," returned that individual politely. "I don't doubt it is Miss Loville's."

"I beg your pardon, what name did you say?"

"Miss Loville, the young lady who has just left us."

"She is very beautiful," said Percy, on a sudden impulse, which he afterwards regretted.

"As fair as a lily, and very proud," returned the manager.

Lady Fitz Charles, to whom casual allusion has been already made, was one of the ladies in Blankshire circles. A widow of good birth and ample fortune, she had but one care in life—namely, to provide her two daughters with wealthy husbands.

The Misses Fitz Charles, their home not being of the happiest, amiably seconded their dear mamma's designs. They went to all the county gaities, and even danced with them, talked to them, and flirted with them, but there it stopped, with the single exception of a curate, with eighty pounds a year, who had presumed to offer his hand to Blanche, the younger and prettier sister.

No one seemed very desirous of possessing the young ladies as partners for life; some people said, Blanche had a leaning towards the curate, and would gladly have married him. But the "family" quickly quashed this statement, and an on dit shortly afterwards appeared in the county paper, to the effect, that the long and intimate friendship between the houses of Fitz Charles and Rivington was to be cemented by the union of Miss Blanche Fitz Charles with the equivoque heir.

But as in the next number of the paper a formal denial of the union was published, people shook their heads and said, "Mr. Duke was not caught yet."

Very soon after Mrs. Colville left Blankshire, Sir Phillip Amory, one of poor Basil's nearest neighbours, died; as he had never married, his heir was a nephew, and the arrival of this young gentleman caused quite a furore among the upper ten.

Sir Charles Amory proved to be a tall, aristocratic looking man of some thirty years; handsome, but with a faded, languid sort of air, as though he had tasted every pleasure the world could offer and was tired of them.

Blankshire welcomed him right warmly. He accepted the numerous invitations that flocked in, he attended balls and dinner parties and gave them in return, but especially he attached himself to Lady Fitz Charles; from an occasional caller he soon became a daily visitor, and the mother's hopes ran high.

On the strength of them she gave a petit soiree dance early in October, at which the baronet of course was present.

Blanche Fitz Charles looked her best that night. No coquettish beauty, no spoilt belle was she; only a simple English maiden, with a fair face and truthful eyes, a type of the woman that good men love, who through all troubles and dangers yet remain faithful and true.

She had won the heart of the faded man of fashion. Sir Charles Amory loved her as much as he could love anything beside himself. He was thirty, and in his life more than one dark secret lay hidden. He had not one noble inspiration; his youth had been spent in worldly pleasures, now these had lost their charm, and so he thought to taste the sweets of home joys. She was nineteen; her young life was clear and open as the pages of an unwritten book, capable of deep strong affection, with many a yearning after higher things; sweet tempered, brave and true; yet the world would have deemed theirs a suitable match, would have envied her the title of Lady Amory and the superb diamonds which Sir Charles's wife would wear.

She knew what her mother expected of her, knew the angry taunts she should receive were she to lose this chance of a "good establishment."

She knew she had no love to give Sir Charles, but yet she stood at his side with a serene calm on her fair face, an unruffled brow. She had cause for fear, but her mind was resolved to do right, and never heed her mother's anger or the sneers of society.

So when Sir Charles, protesting that she must be tired, led her to a seat in the fragrant conservatory, where singing birds made sweetest music, as many fountains rippled softly, and the perfume of rare flowers filled the air, she made no demur, though her heart-beats quickened, and she guessed full well what was coming.

The baronet talked of many things, of the weather, the delightful evening they were having, and other topics of a like novel and interesting character.

Then his voice took a more serious tone, and he came a little closer to her side.

"Miss Fitz Charles—Miss Blanche—I think you can hardly be quite unconscious of what I am going to say. I have only been two months in Blankshire, but those two months have done their work. I love you, and it is my most earnest wish to make you my wife. I have your mother's consent, Blanche, will you not give me yours?"

He ceased and waited for her answer.

The birds sang on, the fountain still played, the sweet perfume of the bottomless plants was unaltered, but Blanche Fitz Charles heeded them not; she was only conscious that what she had feared was come, that the crisis had arrived when she must either face the scene of matrimony, the contempt of relations, or else carry a man she could not love.

She did not hesitate. One moment's silence, and then the girlish voice sounded, sweet and clear.

CHAPTER XIV.

BILL NAGGS staggered back against a tree.

He was a strong, robust man, but the sight of Bella in earnest conversation with a stranger unnerved him.

Why should his Bella, as in hard fancy he had begun to call her, welcome another with that shy, wistful smile? Why should her dark eyes droop beneath their long lashes, unless the newcomer held some strange interest in her heart?

Bill was only a rough labourer, but his passions were strong and earnest.

He stood there in his hiding-place and watched the pair on the seat closely, until he felt for his rival a fierce, strong hatred, until he could have killed him in his wild, mad jealousy.

His eyes noted all he saw Duke's handsome face with its kindly smiles; he took in every detail of his dress, from the black frock coat to the diamond scarf-pin, and then he thought of himself with his plain features, hands rough and horny from hard work, his coarse Sunday suit, purchased cheap at a second-hand outfitter, his homely words and humble earnings.

If they two were rivals, could there be a doubt which Bella would choose?

What had Bill to recommend him, save an honest heart and his deep, strong love for her?

Little dreaming that there was a third present at their interview, Marmaduke Rivington bent forward.

"You have not failed me, then. You have kept your promise."

"I am here."

"I do not know your name. Tell me what shall I call you?"

"Bella Gray."

"Bella, you have done me a great service by coming here. Have you discovered the address I wanted?"

"I have seen the lady. Ah, I do not wonder at your wanting to find her," cried the girl, enthusiastically; "she is so beautiful."

"Ay, and as good as fair. Where is she?"

"Sir, the young lady saw you speaking to me, and she guessed what you said. She knelt to me, in all

her beauty, and begged and prayed of me not to tell you where she was."

Nearer still came Marmaduke. His dark eyes were fixed intently on Bella.

"And you?"

"She told me, sir, she had known bitter trouble; she said your seeing her would bring more. She was so kind, so good, what could I do but promise. I pleaded all I could, but she was firm, and so I gave my word."

"Oh, Bella, you have brought me a heavy disappointment. How could you think I would bring trouble on Ida Colville; I would not harm a hair of her head; I want to remove her from her lonely life, to make her my wife."

"That was what I told her, sir. I know you loved her; I seemed to see it in the look you gave her."

"Did she send no message?"

"Yes, sir; she bid me tell you that she did not find the struggle so very hard, and that having once taken it up she would never change till death came."

Duke listened eagerly till she had ended, then he said with passionate warmth:

"She will do, I know she will; she is too tender to me. Do you know what she does—how she carries money?"

"She did not tell me, but she did not seem poor, and her hands were very white, as though she had never used them for rough work."

"Is she alone?"

"No; she lodges with a woman I used to know, a good kind soul as ever lived."

"Shall you see her, my Ida, again?"

"Perhaps, sir; but not very soon."

"Tell her that I have heard her decision, and will abide by it, but say that I too shall never change, that in life and death I shall be faithful to her."

"I will."

"And Bella, if any harm comes to her, my bright, beautiful love, let me know; a line there will always find me."

He thrust his arm into her hand, and looked for a moment at the sweet face whose almost colourless skin contrasted so well with the dark hair.

"You have tried to serve me, child; I thank you for it. If I seem rough or ungrateful, remember I am in trouble and forgive me."

And then Bill's watch was over, for they separated. Very angry did he feel, very jealous and very sad. What was the secret bond between those two? Why did the stranger seem to hang on every word that fell from Bella's lips? Why did he sit so very close to her? Why did she look after his receding figure with such intensity, or why did she wipe away a tear out of her eye? Poor Bella! She felt inclined for many tears, not one; it seemed so hard that Duke should have poured out his wealth of love all in vain. She could not blame him, she loved the girl's fair sweet face; but she did wish a little fervently that the love the other did not value could be transferred to her, that she might have a good time of love and happiness all her own.

She had such a yearning within her soul for love, such an intense longing for affection. She wanted some one to rest on, some one to care for.

She had a girl's taste for the romantic. Duke Rivington's tale had attracted her interest, his handsome face, with its wistful sadness, had charmed her fancy.

Bella, lonely Bella, never let the fancy grow to something stronger; don't waste your young life in an unrequited love, least of all for one between whom and you a great gulf is fixed—the gulf of caste.

Duke Rivington is not of your world; you cannot belong to him. Admire his handsome face if you like, but don't let the admiration be more than you would bestow on a beautiful picture, a hero of long ago.

The eastern suburb had never seemed more dreary. Paradise Row had never seemed more wretched to Bella than when she re-entered it.

On that Sunday afternoon Mother Naggs was better, and disposed to be amiable. She had spread tea, and pressed a share of it on Bella.

The henpecked husband was there, and he tried to interest her by many a little joke. In vain. Never had she felt more lonely, more dispirited.

Not until the meal was ended did she notice that Bill was absent.

Night Lane, Camden Town, was—and is now, perhaps—an irregular street, with houses on either side of various degrees of respectability. Nobody ever lived in Night Lane who could possibly afford to live anywhere else.

There was nothing inviting about it. The houses were grim, tumble-down looking edifices, containing from six to eight rooms. Some had railings and some hadn't, some possessed steps, others didn't;

but two distinctive peculiarities they all owned in common—not one but whose windows had at least one broken pane, not one but what let lodgings, or tried to do so.

No. 9 (proverbially an unlucky number) was the retreat selected by Mr. Grubbington for himself and Co. to hide their illustrious heads in until better times came.

When he met Ida Colville in the third-class railway carriage they had been there nine months, but the "better times" had not come. They were still fondly expected, anxiously hoped for, but arrived they had not.

I have very often remarked that better times are sadly wanting in punctuality; they very seldom do come when they are expected. If in future they would accept this gentle hint and show more consideration I shall feel obliged, and so I am sure will Mr. Grubbington.

Valencia and Dolores Grubbington—the latter was born just after the failure of one of the companies, hence her melancholy name—did not particularly object to the dingy street. They had seen too many changes in their short lives ever to look on any one really as their home.

Half the truth must be confessed, the grand object of these young ladies was to secure a husband, or rather two, since that possession was an article they found hardly share, and for this purpose Camden town was as hopeful a spot as any other.

Nell and Doll had not been favoured with any very extensive acquaintance with the male sex.

Their father's creditors and enraged shareholders were almost the only specimens of the genus they had encountered, but there is an old proverb which says, "It's never too late to mend," and in this one particular the Misses Grubbington determined to improve at once.

They were not bad looking girls, though it cannot conscientiously be affirmed that they were very much the reverse: Val was a blonde of twenty years standing, tall and comely, with plenty of curls and conversation; Doll, who entered this vale of tears some twelve months later than her sister, was a laughing brunette, much addicted to obnoxious and small hats; Val danced and made puddings, and Doll laughed and darned stockings. Now there was not the slightest doubt that these extensive qualifications, both mental and personal, were just calculated to render two gentlemen happy, the only difficulty was, who was to find the said gentlemen, and who was confidentially to apprise them of the separate happiness awaiting each in the person of a Miss Grubbington.

Matilda fully shared her daughters' aspirations, and continually assured them she never knew happiness until she met her father, which remark might have caused an impatient listener to imagine her maiden life an extremely miserable one, but the Misses Grubbington were dutiful, and they did not even smile at the oft repeated assertion.

It was just as October was drawing to a close that a brilliant idea struck Val; she hastened to share it with her mother and sister.

"There now, after bothering ourselves to death to think how we are to know people (people, dear reader, was the substitute for another word of the strictly masculine gender), I see how it is to be done, quite easily."

"How?" exclaimed Doll, enthusiastically.

"How?" asked Matilda, feebly.

"Our attic."

The audience looked extremely mystified. I really cannot blame them: how an attic was to introduce its owners to society it was not easy to imagine.

"It has a bed in it and a chair."

"Yes," echoed the admiring listeners.

"We will let it, mother dear. Listen: 'Wanted a single gentleman to sleep in an attic and board with the family.' There now, how will that do?"

"Splendidly," cried Doll.

"I don't quite like the boarding plan," sighed Matilda. "We couldn't tell what to charge until we saw how much the young man ate. He might have a large appetite, you see, or he might have a small one."

Neither of her daughters ventured to contradict this new and startling fact.

"I should not like to stint him," observed Val.

"Men are always cross if they are hungry," put in Doll.

"At any rate, I'll see to the attic to-morrow," wound up their mother.

The attic was seen to accordingly. One or two shillings were scraped together in a wonderful manner, and these were expended on its adornment; in a week it was ready, and the sisters went at least half their time in wandering in and out and building bright castles in the air as to its first tenant.

They had given up the idea of advertising as too

expensive, and so a neat card in the window invited single gentlemen to enter; but either the single gentlemen were otherwise engaged, or they were a most rude, rebellious set, for another week went by and they hadn't made the slightest attempt to enter, had not even inquired the terms.

Regularly every afternoon Val and Doll seated themselves in the parlour with their crochets, and regularly they accomplished their stitches, and then glued their eyes to the window, but no lodgers came.

At last one afternoon, when they had almost given up hope, Doll and her mother had gone out, and Val, in a great state of curls and low spirits sat at home alone; she had her tea (low spirits did not deprive her of her appetite, a faithful friend which never forsakes her) cleared away and sat down by the fire to warm herself.

Suddenly a thundering knock came at the door; it was far too loud to have been produced by Doll or Mrs. Grubbington, so Val put one hand to her heart to see if it felt agitated and was surprised to find it beat no quicker than usual; she next shook out her curls and then proceeded to the door with a secret delight that Doll was not at home to attempt to take the duties of conversation and bargaining upon herself.

The door opened and disclosed a solitary specimen of the animal known as man: he was very tall and very thin, his eyes were black and his hair just matched; his face was brown as though he had been very much exposed to all sorts of weather; he wore a complete suit of grey tweed, which possessed all the peculiarities which usually mark the work of country tailors, that is to say, the trousers were very long and very narrow, the coat very short and very wide, the waistcoat's presence had to be taken on trust, since it was completely invisible; his scarf was brilliant, an orange ground decorated with green dragons, his felt hat was of a rufous brown; his years might have been three and twenty, and fully twice that number of freckles were distributed on his nose and cheeks; he carried a portmanteau, and an umbrella of the kind known as gingham was tucked under one arm. Not a very prepossessing being you will say; but Val was charitably disposed towards him; she admired bright colours, and considered freckles manly. What to say to him troubled her far more than his appearance. Very nervously she commenced:

"Will you walk inside?"

Still carrying the portmanteau, with the umbrella yet in his embrace, he followed her.

CHAPTER XV.

The young man entered the little parlour and stared profoundly around it.

Val begged him to take a chair, and when he had done so seated herself opposite. Really she did not know how to commence the interview.

Her companion saved her the trouble.

"You have an apartment to let. I thought it might suit me."

He spoke with a languid drawl and dropped the portmanteau to the ground, as though he could no longer support its weight. He next proceeded to remove his hat, which he placed exactly in the centre of the table.

These little arrangements being completed, he thrust his hands into the capacious pockets of his coat, and waited for her answer.

"We have only a bedroom," replied Val, after mature consideration. "We could not give you up a sitting room, but you could board with us if you liked."

Mrs. Grubbington and Doll at this important juncture returned.

With an excited whisper Val informed her mother of the state of affairs, and then modestly beat a retreat, dragging the reluctant Doll with her.

Summoning a little of her great husband's energy to her aid, Matilda managed beautifully.

She extracted from the young man that his name was Timothy Sheepswell and that his father held a large farm in Essex, also that he was the sole heir of the aforesaid father, and had just come up to London to seek his fortune; or, in other words, to enter on a situation at an establishment in High Street, Camden Town.

Now, though the word "establishment" was sufficiently vague, the rest of the story was hopeful. Mrs. Grubbington recollected that Val delighted in a country life, that milk and butter held special charms for Doll, and she agreed to let the attic to Mr. Timothy Sheepswell for the enormous weekly rental of seven shillings and sixpence.

When the boarding scheme was discussed Mr. Timothy modestly said that he was to have his meals at the "establishment," excepting on Sundays, when, if Mrs. Grubbington consented to admit him

to her family circle, he should be quite willing to pay for such a privilege.

He did not say all this in so many words, but he blushed and stammered, and said "yes" and "no," so that his future landlady made out his meaning pretty well.

At last he took up the portmanteau, shouldered the umbrella, put on his hat, and rose to depart.

"Then when are we to expect you, Mr. Sheepswell?" cried Matilda, with her faded smile, extending her hand.

"To-morrow, ma'am."

And he dropped the portmanteau and umbrella to take the hand, which he shook with such violence as to make it ache for some time.

"Girls," cried Matilda, when she had closed the door, "come down. He's gone."

She need not have troubled to tell them of the event, since they had watched it from the window, and before she had well finished they were at her side.

The trio returned to the parlour. Mrs. G. sat down in the solitary easy-chair, which, as all the springs were broken, anything but deserved its name. The girls settled themselves on either side and began.

"Now, ma, do tell us all about it; what he said and how he looked, and what you said, and just everything."

"Oh, my dears, I wish your father had been at home. It was a most trying interview for me."

"Never mind that, mother. Do tell us."

"What is his name? Oh, mother, surely you didn't forget to ask?"

"Oh, do be quick, mother."

Mrs. Grubbington never hurried herself. It is presumed she did not know the meaning of the word haste.

After settling herself a little more comfortably, she answered:

"Timothy Sheepswell."

"Timothy," repeated Val, dubiously. "It isn't very aristocratic."

"Oh, but it has such a nice countrified sound," said Doll. "Timothy Sheepswell. I wonder how old he is."

"I haven't the slightest idea. He is coming to-morrow, and then you can judge for yourselves."

"To-morrow."

Val determined on the spot to curl up her hair that night, while Doll bestowed herself to pay extra care to the management of her chignon next morning.

"He is not very handsome," deprecated Mrs. Grubbington, "but he is quiet and well behaved. His father is a large farmer down in Essex, and this is the young man's first visit to London."

"I hope he'll like it," burst forth Val, "O, mother, how can you say he is not handsome, his eyes are quite beautiful, and he has quite a military walk."

"He is not to compare to your father," said Matilda, slightly, "but seven and sixpence a week is something, especially now we can get no credit."

"What is he, mother, a clerk? I hope he's a clerk, it has such a genteel sound."

"He is engaged in an establishment he told me, he takes his meals there, excepting on Sundays, when he honours us."

"What a nice companion he will be for Percy when he calls," (Percy's horror if he could only have seen the companion assigned to him.)

"Percy hasn't been here for an age," said Doll, who was fond of her handsome brother. "I wish he'd come, he cheers us up so."

"Your father met him the other day. He said he looked extremely well; he asked him why he had not been round lately, and he said he had a young friend staying with him."

"Percy never seemed like one of us," remarked Val, "even when he lived at home."

"Was he the eldest of us all, mother?"

"No, dear, there were five older than Percy; they all died within a week of brain fever."

"The other Percy died then, didn't he, mother?"

"Yes," and then she fell to crying softly; she always did when she talked of her lost children.

"Don't cry, mother, you've got us left, and your own Percy."

"Yes, but I never can bear to think of that child, he was such a pretty, winning little fellow."

"Who was he, ma?—I mean what was his name besides Percy?"

"I never knew, Val. People said afterwards that he was heir to a large estate, but I never knew if it were true."

She evidently wished to dismiss the subject and began to talk of the new lodger; this theme possessing far more interest for her daughters, they eagerly discussed it, and the child, Percy, who had died twelve years before, was speedily forgotten.

The next day came, none too soon for the demoiselles Grubington.

Precisely at ten o'clock Mr. Timothy Sheepswell arrived.

He was ushered into the little parlour, and the mistress of the house presented her daughters in due form.

Mr. Timothy acknowledged the introduction by two bows which nearly brought his face on a level with his knees, but he was too sleepy to be talkative, and to the unmitigated horror of Val and Doll he retreated to his attic before ten minutes had elapsed.

He went to his "establishment" at eight the following morning and returned at ten.

The young ladies came to the conclusion that their fascinations must be reserved for Sunday.

On that day, therefore, they appeared in their best array, Val with her fair curls more carefully arranged than usual, and Doll with the most elaborate and faultless of chignons.

It was the head of the firm's custom to rest his mighty brain in bed till a late hour on the Sabbath.

His wife, what with waiting on him and attending to the preparation of what was emphatically the dinner of the week, was seldom presentable.

Mr. Timothy Sheepswell consequently found the two young ladies alone.

Both greeted him with charming affability. Val hoped he was not tired, Doll felt sure he was hungry.

The young man was evidently quite oppressed beneath such a weight of kindness. He sat down, however, meek and unresisting as the first syllable of his name, which he much resembled, while Val poured him out a cup of steaming coffee, and Doll, with her own fair fingers, laid a red herring on his plate.

The sight of these delicacies somewhat restored his composure, and he soon proved himself to be well acquainted with the use of a knife and fork.

After a few mouthfuls had somewhat restored and strengthened the inner man, he felt equal to a little conversation.

"Hope I see you well, miss," to Val, who sat next him. "Fine weather, miss; better than we often get in November."

Val, who trembled just a little, answered that she was very well, and that the weather was most delightful. Then she sipped her coffee, and smiled at her sister.

But Doll was cross and didn't smile back again.

(To be continued.)

ROSES.

A MODERATE liking for roses as good things in their place has been justly considered one of the results of home education which are least open to objection.

It is, however, by no means general among persons who have taken so prominent a part in public life as to have attracted the attention of history, and who share with the black beetle a positive distaste for the rose.

The famous Chevalier de Guise could not smell a rose without feeling uncomfortable; and Venieri, one of the Doges of Venice, suffered under the same disqualification for the pursuits of gardening. Anne, of Austria, wife of Louis XIII., could not even look at a rose in a painting without being seized with tantrums.

Nevertheless, many people who are willing as a rule to take examples from the great have persisted in entertaining friendly sentiments towards this flower, and every time that the spring and early summer bring back the pretty vegetable they fall to telling one another all about it.

In the East there is still a belief that the rose was formed by a tear of the prophet Mahomet, but nations of more cool and disciplined imagination have sometimes admitted that its origin is lost in obscurity. Roses were used very early in history among the most potent ingredients of love philters. They seem to have been imported by the Romans from Egypt until the reign of Domitian. Antiochus slept upon a bed of rose-leaves. Mark Antony begged that Cleopatra would cover his tomb with these flowers, and "mea rosa" was a favourite term of endearment among Roman lovers, as who should say "mon chou" (my cabbage) nowadays in France. Homer has adorned the shield of Achilles and the helmet of Hector with roses.

Among the Greeks it was a custom to leave bequests for the maintenance of sepulchral rose-gardens over the grave of the testator: and at Torrallo, near Venice, an inscription may still be seen which shows that this fashion was adopted in Italy. In Stock's

collection of engravings on stone there is a beautiful design out in garnet. It represents a butterfly settling on a rose, and it is supposed to commemorate the death of a young girl.

In Turkey, a stone rose is often sculptured above the graves of unmarried women. A charming bas-relief on the tomb of Mme. de la Live, who died at the age of twenty-one, represents Time mowing a rose with his scythe. According to Indian mythology, Pagodasiri, one of the wives of Vishnu, was found in a rose.

Zoroaster is said to have made a rose-tree spring out of the earth and bud and blossom in the presence of Darius, who had called on him to perform a miracle.

In Babylon a preparation of shoe-leather was much esteemed when it had been impregnated with the scent of roses; and Abdulkari, an eminent Turk, who wanted to live there, being made aware of the fact, discovered an ingenious way to profit by it. In reply to a demand which he had made for the freedom of the city the Babylonians sent him a bowl brimful of water, to signify that there was no room among them for an intruder.

Abdulkari placed a rose-leaf on the surface of the water without spilling a drop of it, and having thus indicated that he might be received without making a mess, he obtained the object of his desire.

THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS.

TURNING out from the beaten rut,
I stepped within a poor man's hut:
"Poor man," I questioned, "tell me, pray,
Hath Happiness ere passed this way?"
Said he, "Sue's never crossed my path,
Or at beside my humble hearth!"

I sought a man of wealth untold,
And found him counting o'er his gold:
"Rich man," I questioned, "canst thou
tell

The place where Happiness doth dwell?"
He answered, "She whom thou dost mean
Is often talked of—never seen!"

Soon after, on my mission bent,
I saw a hermit, near his tent:
"Whence comes Happiness, hermit true?"
Said I to him ere he withdrew.
"Alas!" he answered, with a groan,
"That is a name to me unknown!"

Meeting a statesman, old and gray,
Who held a nation under sway,
I cried, "O, sage of noble mien,
Hast thou aught of Happiness seen?"
"Her blest abode," said he, "I've sought
For three-score years—but found it not!"

Alas! thought I, if rich and poor,
The man of fame, the wretch obscure,
Have sought for Happiness in vain,
Why should I hope to ascertain
The 'biding-place and earthly throne
Of one who is so little known?

While thus thinking the matter o'er,
I stopped beside a widow's door,
And, looking in, a child I saw
Sleeping upon a bed of straw;
Then I listened—although 'twas rude—
And heard the widow pray for food.

I hastened home, and from my fare
I bore to her a goodly share;
And while I waited, full of glee,
A smiling angel came to me,
And murmured, as she kissed my brow,
"I am Happiness! Blessed art thou!"

A. B. B.

RESERVE.—"As to his being, as you say, 'not open,' I don't know what you mean," she said. "You did not expect him to disclose his inmost thoughts to us upon our first meeting, and I like people to leave one something to find out. I think people are very like chestnuts—when you take them quite out of their shells they soon lose all their gloss. I like a man for being a little reserved."

We hope that the illumination of the clock at St. Stephen's will still continue to be extinguished the moment the House rises, for it tells the wives of married members of Parliament that their husbands ought to be at home shortly, and that is just the information which the M.P.s are all anxious to have conveyed.

SIR MICHAEL COSTA has been presented with a magnificent ivory and gold conductor's baton by the Glasgow Choral Union.

THE DRAMA.

PRINCESS'S THEATRE.

THE greatly successful play of "All for Her" gave place at the Princess's Theatre to a new (at least new to London) drama entitled "Abel Drake," by Messrs. John Saunders and Tom Taylor. A more unsatisfactory play than "Abel Drake" has rarely been seen. Adapted from Mr. Saunders's novel "Abel Drake's Wife," besides exhibiting nearly all of the defects difficult to avoid in dramatising a novel, the story, clumsily put together, and loosely connected, is too frequently interrupted by irrelevant incidents, meant as realistic 'garnishings, and by episodes to which great prominence is given, but which lead to nothing. These caused the play to become tedious and wearying, and in most instances instead of creating or increasing the interest, excited only ridicule and derision. To these radical defects of construction and arrangement may be added the fact that neither the hero, Abel Drake, nor the heroine, his wife, Barbara, as limned by the adapter, enlisted the sympathies of the audience—the former, to a slight extent, in the first act (the only good one out of the five to which by trivial incidents the play was needlessly extended) did so by his manly bearing in protecting his employer. After the first night the play underwent wholesale excisions, condensation, and partial reconstruction. The five acts were reduced to three, by which greater closeness in the action was maintained—several of the tedious redundancies were omitted, including much of the quasi-comic business of the lazy water-carrier, Job, and the attempted arrest of Abel Drake as a deserter; while the final reconciliation between him and his wife took place in Mr. Welcombe's drawing-room, when the guests temporarily retire to permit the pair an explanatory tête-à-tête, and which was but an anticlimax. The episodes of the boy with the song and clappers in the corn-field and Barbara's vision ought likewise to have been omitted, especially the latter, which in the revised version is an anachronism as it was presented when Abel Drake had returned from New Zealand. As one of the emendations, Abel Drake is made to discover the loss of the money he received for his invention, but nothing comes of it. On the whole, although in some respects improved by condensation, the play failed even in its revised form to please, and was withdrawn.

HAYMARKET THEATRE.

THE necessity of doing something new has led to the production at this theatre, of "an English version of 'L'Étranger,'" in which M. Alexandre Dumas has aired his eccentric opinions. We may say at once that the play, whatever may be its merits as a dramatic work, is too Parisian in sentiment to command the sympathy of an English audience; and that probably even a French one might justly take exception to its moral tendency. Certainly we do not believe that it is true to Parisian life as it really exists; and it is evident that M. Dumas has constructed his story from a social ideal of his own. We do not think, either, that he has intended it as a picture of actual married life anywhere, or to recommend it in detail as illustrating a theory of marital obligation, or of the best mode of avenging the wrongs of woman.

May not the writer have designed, in the characters of le Duc de Septmonts (Mr. Hermann Vezin), and the American, Clarkson (Mr. Charles Harcourt), a contrast between aristocratic arrogance on the one hand and independence on the other? May not the moral of the play be an ultra-democratic one? Some portion of the dialogue portrays this contrast sharply, particularly that portion of it which is uttered by Clarkson.

Assuredly, if we are to accept the interpretation put on these parts by Mr. Vezin and Mr. Harcourt, we should say that such is the notion which they have formed of them. This notion is confirmed by the view of the situation taken by Mauriceau (Mr. Howe), who sees too late the folly of his desire for aristocratic distinction, learning that nature will not indorse his rational wish for progeny in order that the rank which his daughter has wedded may descend to her posterity.

To this end, too, Clarkson is made to condemn the expedient of the Duke—namely, that of obtaining a fortune by his wife, instead of earning it by his labour.

The marriage perplexities which attend the development of the idea are mere accidents, and meant to have no bearing on any moral relative to sexual associations.

The love-story is the weakest in the world; and it is hard to take any interest in the melancholy Gérard (Mr. H. B. Conway). The sin of the Duchesse is a mere fancy, not even an intention; besides, her failing is one that leans to virtue's side, and the woman is thoroughly innocent, even though tempted in thought.



[THE PROPOSAL.]

VINCENT LUTTREL; OR, FRIENDSHIP BETRAYED.

By the Author of "Fighting for Freedom," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MR. STRAPS pushed the bottle over to the captain, and made a sign that he could drink no more.

The captain interpreted the movement.

"Ah! very good, my young friend, you're not so seasoned as I am to these light wines. Your health, Mr. Straps," and off went the last glass in the fifth bottle; Mr. Fitzgerald being still as collected, though somewhat thicker in speech, as when they sat down; even the *eau de vie* had only quickened his pulse a little, for he was of that race of dram drinking postillions described by Byron, on whom "schnapps" have no effect:

—and dogs, whom Hundsfoot or Ferflucter

Affect no more than lightning a conductor.

Not so, Mr. Straps, he made an attempt to rise from his seat to grasp the hand of the captain in token of his tipsy friendship, but his heel caught the leg of the chair, and he would have measured his length on the floor of the cabaret, but for the united interposition of Fitzgerald and mine host, the first of whom caught his proffered hand, the other received his reeling body in his arms.

"Would Monsieur like a *facre*?"

"Certainly," replied the captain.

The garçon understood his business. He did not mean that a drunken stranger should be taken from his doorway by a public conveyance in sight of the police, en plein jour.

Jean Potdevin took up the parable.

"Monsieur appears a little indisposed. Philippe will take one arm and accompany him into the next street by the back way, where there will be a *facre*; do you know the gentleman's hotel, Philippe?"

"Roo de Louver, mosso, roo de Louver; Grand Hotel—"

"I will direct the driver, friend Potdevin," struck in Fitzgerald. "Here Philippe, just show my friend out through the *Passage Aveugle*, and I'll get the voiture. *Vite, vite, mon ami, ces polissons de police sont tous yeux*," and Mr. Straps, who protested that he could "back himself to walk a chalk line for

a *sur'rio*," was led, with shaky knees, through Blind Man's Alley into the next street, where the captain and the garçon helped him into a hackney-coach, and the former having given the man an address in the Quartier Latin, where beds were à louer at any time of day or night, thither they drove. Arrived at this caravanserai of students, medical, military and artistic, some of whom are the most Bohemian of all classes of Bohemian Paris in their habits and customs, the captain, who was well known in the quartier, engaged a large and tolerably clean double-bedded room. In one of the beds he persuaded the bemuddled and used-up Mr. Straps to deposit himself, and in a few minutes had the satisfaction to see him, and also to hear him, paying his nasal devotions to the god of sleep.

For himself he repaired to the salon barbeier of the renowned Professor Basibus-de-nez, where a clean shave, a brush-up, a polish of your boots, a sewed on button, a white paper collar, and other small personal luxuries were to be had, with a perusal of the cheap papers included, for two sous each—a public accommodation of which the English traveller was ignorant until the railway system imported this adjunct to our public lavatories.

Here the captain refreshed, shaved, brushed, polished, with a soupçon of scented powder on his grizzled hair, whiled away an hour, and emerged, as he termed, "fresh as paint and fit as a four-year old," for a "constitutional" on the Boulevard Sevastopol, then just opened.

Another hour and a half, during which he disposed of a dinner à la carte, consisting of a portion of soup and bouilli, two cotelettes à jardinière, half a dozen rissarolles (they were made of bullock's brains professing to be sweetbread), and a glass dish of "sweets," finished off with six hot galettes, the captain retraced his steps and returned to his yet sleeping friend Straps.

As the captain's business hours began about midnight, he doffed his coat, and having again satisfied himself that Mr. Straps was in a sound sleep, laid himself on his bed, for what he called his "siesta." Thus having "burnt the daylight out," the captain arose, and found that Mr. Straps, being young and hardy, had slept off his debauch.

The young man, however, had no taste for its continuance another night, perceiving which the captain, with much tact, inveighed against such proceedings.

For himself, he protested that he did not know when he had drunk so much at a sitting, and that he would take care he did not repeat it in a hurry, lay-

ing all the blame upon the good company and amusing qualities of Mr. Straps, for whose welfare he professed a deep interest.

As he felt pretty considerably "seedy," however, he consented to accompany Mr. Straps to his hotel, advising him also, en route, to patronise the salon of the "professor," which Mr. Straps gladly did, vastly to the improvement of his personal appearance, and the utter obliteration of all traces of his "key of the street" adventures.

Of course, a moderate dose of "the hair of the dog that bit him" was prescribed for Mr. Straps when they arrived at the hotel, and the captain condescendingly partook of the remedy.

Thus fortified the conversation of the preceding night was confidentially resumed.

At parting, the captain arranged that Mr. Straps should communicate with him, if he desired to do so, under a feigned name, which he wrote on a card, "M. Simon, rue de St. Landry, numero—" care of M. Hernandez: while he would sign his communications with the name of Jules Simon.

In return Mr. Straps gave him "place" in England, "for," said he, as you'll only write to me what concerns master, and what you don't care for his seeing, why, "Mr. Straps, Dorrington Hall, —shire, England," will do well enough.

These matters arranged, the friends of a night parted with expressions of natural esteem and confidence, and a promise from Mr. Straps of an early visit to the captain's "hotel," which turned out to be no other than the cabaret borgne wherein the Burgundy and brandy of their morning's meal was consumed, and from whence the captain thought it advisable to transfer his inebriated companion to the lodging house in the Quartier Latin, where a drunken lodger would be less obnoxious to police surveillance or indeed to any notice whatever.

And here we shall dismiss the intimacy of Mr. Straps and his chance-found captain until the further progress of our story shall reveal some of the consequences of that connexion.

It is time that we should return to Cloverbrook, and see "how our villeggiatura will get on." We shall thus breathe a purer social atmosphere than that of the "capital of civilisation," and its focus of vices.

True that since the period of which we write Paris has been purged by fire and sword, and tried by steel and sulphur, by foreign plunder and domestic trea-

son, by siege and famine, by murder, riot, and intestine bloodshed, but her populace remains the same. Splendid vice and squalid prodigality are fast regaining, even under a republic, the bad eminence which stamps her as the gayest and most vicious, the most luxurious and the most criminal of European cities.

How refreshing then is the contrast presented by the parity of English rural life and the virtues which nestle amid "the happy homes of England."

Jasper Dorrington had guessed rightly. There was a matrimonial movement in progress, in which his sister Alice and the stalwart young Yorkshire squire, Lionel Pomfret, were the principal actors.

An attendant, the wedding for which, though finally assented to, the day had not yet been fixed, Lionel Pomfret was staying at Rosemead, whence his visits to the Hall were frequent, as were also those of Isabel Denton, between whom and Alice Dorrington there was now the most sisterly affection and confidence.

Old Sir Piers Pomfret also had come over on a visit, and was now a frequent visitor at Rosemead, where his genial jollity and hearty friendship did much to dispense the last lingering clouds of Hugh Denton's hypochondriacal depression.

Indeed, the clean breast that he had made, with the cheerful and comforting assurance of the clergyman, and the feeling of being protected by such good will and power as was possessed by Evelyn and Lionel, restored Hugh Denton to his former self; and few would have recognised him when at the rectory, the Hall, or in his own home, as the mind-and-body-shattered wreck of a few short months previous.

A delightful party had assembled at the Hall, by invitation of Sir Herbert, to meet Sir Piers Pomfret and his son.

Evelyn Stewart and Hugh Denton; the local M.D., Doctor Sibbey; the village lawyer, Mr. Pounce; young Flamboyant, as representing the agricultural and sporting element, were among the males; while Alice Dorrington, Isabel Denton, and the three full-blown Misses Flamboyant formed Lady Herbert Dorrington's contingent.

After dinner, and before the ladies had retired, Sir Herbert, whose taste for a little harmless banter we have already noticed after a little mystery or intendo, declared his intention of no longer being kept in the dark as to the time fixed by the lady diplomats who had charge of such things for the inevitable marriage of his own dear daughter Alice to the finest young fellow in that country or the next—Lionel Pomfret.

This was what he called "taking the bull by the horns."

But old Lady Dorrington was equal to the occasion.

She declared that it was Sir Herbert's fault that the day was not fixed, and that it had not been named, in deference to his authority on such matters.

Sir Herbert playfully shifted the responsibility to Sir Piers Pomfret.

"I deny the soft impeachment of my tardiness in this affair," exclaimed Sir Piers. "I was always of opinion that 'happy' is the word that's not long in doing, and when I asked Lady Pomfret, now in a better place, and the jovial old man inclined his head reverentially; 'yes, Lionel, my boy, when I asked your mother—she was a Fitzwilliam—whether she'd have me, it was in this wise, 'Kate, I am sure I love you, and I think you like me. I know your family, you know mine. If you can love me, clasp hands upon it, and say you'll change your name for Pomfret when I've got the licence, which shall be before May-day. I'll ask mamma, Kate, and save you that trouble.' And so we did clasp hands upon it, and 'twas a bargain—the best I ever made, Sir Herbert, and the heaviest loss when I—your mother's memory, Lionel Pomfret—my wife's memory, Kate Pomfret, ladies and gentlemen, in solemn silence."

Every head was bowed, and the toast reverentially given.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen," continued Sir Piers, "having honoured the dead, let us wish health, happiness, and prosperity to the living. To the happy union of Lionel Pomfret and Alice Dorrington, ladies and gentlemen, with nine times nine!"

None shouted more lustily, none rattled the mahogany louder than the father of the bride.

"I could wish," said he, "that Jasper was here. I wrote him, or rather my lady did at my dictation, a couple of weeks since, and we are yet without a reply. I hope Jasper, who is a little too fond of Paris and its pleasures, is not led away by its dissipation, but I have some hopes that he has a companion whose character and experience will restrain him. His friend, Vincent Luttrell, whose acquaintance he made at Rosemead, is quite an admirable Crichton in his way."

"Did Sir Herbert say Vincent Luttrell?" gasped Isabel Denton to Lionel Pomfret, who sat next to her.

"He did," replied Lionel. "I never saw the gentleman myself, but report is indeed loud in his praise."

"Is Vincent Luttrell now with Mr. Jasper?"

"No, Sir Herbert, his father, says."

"Then he is, indeed, in peril," said Isabel.

Lionel Pomfret looked at her with surprise, as a spasm of horror contracted her fair brow.

"May I ask why, and of what he is in peril?"

"My father, when he told the story of his accidental homicide, held back the name of his persecutor and false friend. Know, then, that bane of his life, that shadow on his path, that serpent among flowers, is Vincent Luttrell—a man as base and treacherous, Mr. Lionel, as yourself and Evelyn are candid and honourable."

"You astonish me; and was it then Vincent Luttrell who endeavoured to gain your hand in marriage by playing on your father's fears?"

"Even so. From my earliest recollection, that dreadful man, possessed of my father's secret, has practised upon his fears, and subjugated him, body and soul, to his galling tyranny. Trading on his fears, he has plundered him of thousands, pretending that his silence was well-bought; and at length, grown bold by impunity, he extorted from my father a large sum on pretence of transporting himself to America, there to seek that fortune which here, as he pretended, had eluded his grasp. But he is not gone, and the shock of his responsiveness so unmanly my suffering father that his confession to you and Evelyn, which has so relieved his mind, was the consequence of his despairing terror."

"I thank you for this confidence, Miss Denton, which I certainly shall not abuse. The time may come, and soon, when it may be no longer necessary to conceal my knowledge of the villain who has thus betrayed friendship. Till then, Miss Denton, depend upon it your secret is safe in my keeping."

"Thank you, thank you, from the bottom of my soul, Mr. Pomfret," said Isabel, fervently, when her eye caught the merry twinkle of Sir Piers Pomfret's, who, with upraised glass, was looking curiously towards her.

"Pon my word, Miss Denton, if I didn't know better, I should have thought that Lionel was proposing to you, the young rascal. I've been trying to catch his eye for five minutes to ask him to join in another toast in which you are more immediately concerned—"

A servant entered with a letter. Sir Piers paused.

"From my son, Jasper, excuse me a few seconds," said Sir Herbert, breaking the seal and running over the contents. "He here tells me that he hopes to be with us in a week or two, at farthest; that meanwhile, as all his arrangements were made before the receipt of our letters, he has set out for Germany in company of his excellent friend Luttrell; and inquires whether Alice is the cause of this pressing call on all members of the family to assemble here at the beginning of next month. Ha! ha! rather a clever guess that, Sir Piers; a shrewd young man is Jasper, and though he'll never be called on to practice in wig and gown, he'll do honour to the bench, and some day to the chair at Quarter Sessions, Sir Piers."

"Or as representing the county, or, at least, a borough in Parliament," said Sir Piers Pomfret. "Well drink his health, Sir Herbert."

And Jasper's health was drunk accordingly, with wishes for his speedy and safe return.

The party rose from table together, and Lionel, possessing himself of the arm of Alice, Evelyn Stewart took that of Isabel, and they were soon under the lofty overhanging branches of the grand beech avenue, on which the first brown leaves of autumn were changing and variegating the masses of foliage with a splendour of colour unknown to leafy summer.

They walked on in embarrassed silence. At length Evelyn spoke. There was a slight tremor in his manly voice that deepened its tone and vibrated in unison with Isabel's feelings, whose tension was almost painful:

"Miss Denton—no, I cannot call you by that cold and formal name—Isabel, may I ask you to absolve me from my half-promise not again to solicit your hand until the origin of the mysterious terror under which your father suffered was made known?"

"You have my consent, but you are not yet in possession of the name of my father's persecutor; I had almost said destroyer. I cannot withhold from you a true friend, so valued a counsellor; the confidence I have reposed in Lionel Pomfret. It is the vaunted friend of Jasper Dorrington, the arch hypocrite who has wormed himself into his good opinion, of whom my father told the dread story of his sufferings; it is Vincent Luttrell, and none other, who basely sought my hand by the unworthy means of sacrificing my father's good name and consigning him to infamy and worse than death."

Evelyn Stewart remained a few moments silent.

"And is this villain expected here as the guest of Sir Herbert and the honoured friend of his son? I will myself take measures that this shall not be. He shall not pollute this place with his presence. Leave that to me, Isabel, and await the result without fear."

"Thank you, again, thank you. I now feel that, supported and aided by you and Mr. Lionel Pomfret, I can meet and crush the viper who has poisoned my father's, my own, and I fear my poor deluded mother's existence. Oh, what a load of misery has been relieved by these disclosures which have, indeed, been too long delayed."

"Dismiss these sad thoughts, I beseech you," said Evelyn Stewart, tenderly. "Oh, Isabel, surely the shadow that has crossed the path of our true love is but the earnest of the sunshine which shall light its future. Your father's friend, young Pomfret, will take the hand of your dear companion, Alice Dorrington, before the sacred altar in a few brief days; the sun which rises upon her bridal morn should be the same as that which smiles on ours. Oh, say not 'No' to my supplication, dearest Isabel, but end my fears and doubts by one little 'Yes'—one brief syllable which will make me the happiest of men."

The young clergyman had possessed himself of Isabel's right hand, and placing himself before her felt on one knee, looking into her eyes, as if there to read her sentence. They were suffused in tears.

He rose slowly, and the next moment Isabel Denton threw herself into his arms.

"You consent then, dear Isabel."

"Now and for ever your loving wife."

The contract was sealed by a kiss on her fair forehead, and Evelyn Stewart, truly the happiest of men, returned with his friends into the mansion.

Then Isabel hastened to her chamber and, having removed the too visible traces of her recent emotion, rejoined the party.

As for Lionel Pomfret, "his bosom's lord sat lightly on his throne," and when Alice and Isabel met in the evening the joy of the former was overflowing when she heard from her dear friend that Isabel had consented to make Evelyn happy on the day on which she gave her own hand to Lionel Pomfret.

The preparations for the double event now went on apace, and the hours flew swiftly with all but the expectant bridegrooms. With them Times seemed to lag with leaden foot. Yet the old scythe-bearer neither hastened nor retarded his even pace, and on the evening of the day before that appointed for the ceremony, Oloversnok was gladdened by the news that the heir of Dorrington had arrived at his paternal mansion. But he arrived alone. Where then was his anxiously-looked-for friend, Vincent Luttrell? We shall see presently.

CHAPTER XIV.

The journey of Vincent Luttrell and Jasper Dorrington to Homburg was, as most railway journeys are, without incident.

They stopped and refreshed at many more stations than the swiftness of English locomotion would permit, for in getting over ground, when once he gets start, no foreigner can hold speed with the "slow" Englishman; and the same headlong pace marks his career when he engages in play, or in the desperate game of war.

The character of Vincent Luttrell appeared much changed; he no longer held his impassive features under rigid control; he no longer stood cool under the adverse strokes of fate; or remained unmoved when he basked in the smiles of fortune.

An abstracted thoughtfulness took possession of him, and neither the banter of his friend Jasper Dorrington nor the incidents of travel would arouse him from his meagre reverie.

At other times he became feverishly excited, talked rapidly and inconsiderately, and what had never before been his habit, drank occasionally deeply of strong wine and fiery liquors.

To strangers also his manner was more than once brusque and offensive and, to the surprise of Jasper, he involved himself in altercations with persons at the Kursaal upon trivial points; on one occasion carrying out his quarrel with an Russian "Yankor" to a duel with the schlager, wherein, to the astonishment of all, the "mad Englishman" made a bulwark of his too-confident opponent, ornamenting him with a glass from his cheekbone to his chin that was the nine-days' talk of the Balda and the lifelong disfigurement of the combative Count Karl Kreutzer, who forthwith disappeared from the society of Homburg.

Other symptoms of a mind ill at ease also developed themselves. His play, usually so methodical and calculating, was reckless, and his defiance of "the doctrine of chances" was as remarkable and ruinous

as his former deliberate system of availing himself of every "point" had been the admiration of all, even the opponents who were defeated by his combined skill and good fortune. The considerable sum which he had acquired by the plunder of the dead, and added to by subsequent "good luck," melted from his grasp like the ill-gotten witches' treasures in the fairy tale which became stones and dry leaves in the hands of their sinful possessor.

So thoroughly "cleaned-out" was Vincent Luttrell within a week of their sojourn at the Baths, that dire necessity drove him to produce to Jasper a little note of hand, of which the reader is already aware, and that gentleman almost emptied his pocket-book in its discharge, wrote by that night's post to "the governor" an urgent request, "in order to prevent his trespassing on his friend Luttrell's purse," for "a letter of credit for one hundred pounds, to be ready to meet them on their return to Paris."

Of course it was sent "by return," but even the easy Sir Herbert could not help an observation to Lady Dorrington.

"My dear, I am somewhat uneasy about Jasper. I have accidentally discovered that his balance at the County Bank has been reduced by more than a thousand pounds in a few months—and indeed, I know it is overdrawn. Our son certainly shall not be restricted in any reasonable indulgence, or be compelled to descend to any shabby expedient unbecoming his position. He has had one hundred pounds on London, one hundred on Paris, and one hundred on Frankfurt in seven weeks. Those sums are outside his own resources, so largely drawn upon, and now he asks for another hundred pounds to meet him at Paris on their return."

And the good old baronet heaved a sigh as he looked upon an account-book, a pass-book, a cheque-book, and sundry letters and papers which lay before him on his library table, for to that apartment he had just summoned Lady Dorrington by a request for "a little conversation."

"Bless and save us, my dear," exclaimed the old lady; "you quite terrify me. I never meant to mention it to you, which was very wrong; as I now see, but I gave Jasper a hundred of my 'pin-money' the week that he went up to London, and he's sent to me, too, for another hundred pounds to lend to this Mr. Luttrell, I think he says." "One hundred, two hundred, three hundred, and the old lady counted on her fingers the round sums until she passed from the little finger of her left hand on to the right.

"Don't bother yourself, Charlotte, in that way. It amounts to something like seventeen hundred in a less number of months. It's not the amount, Lottie, though that's large, so much as the dreadful suspicion it raises in the minds of those that love him best that he is in bad hands, for even Jasper is certainly a little too prone to place faith in appearances and too easily led when pleasure invites. Yes, my dear Lottie, we must hasten his return, and must narrowly watch and make inquiries about this Luttrell and his antecedents. If we wrong him, Lottie, I will discard my suspicions and welcome him to Dorrington and our family—but if, as I sorely fear, he should prove an unfit companion for our son, I will drive him forth, and be as round and plain with him in my displeasure as I have been hearty and friendly in my good opinion."

Poor Lady Dorrington applied her handkerchief to her eyes, and shed some honest tears.

She could keep no secrets from her husband, and the recent communication of her son's extravagance had come upon a yet more delicate disclosure made that morning, in confidence, by the bride-elect of Lionel Pomfret.

"It's dreadful, very dreadful to find he's a spend-thrift—but that may be only through bad company and thoughtlessness. There's another thing troubles me much. Dear Isabel Denton, who is about to become the wife of our excellent young minister, has no concealment from our Alice, as I have, Herbert, none from you. Mr. Evelyn Stewart, and he is joined in the wish by Miss Denton, have, upon hearing that our son would be home and take part in the approaching nuptials of our daughter, proposed at this very late hour to postpone their marriage for a day or two. Alice, with much hesitation, adding that Mr. Stewart, for reasons, in which Miss Denton fully concurred, desired not to meet Mr. Dorrington on the occasion. She added that Mr. Stewart would officiate at her wedding, but that, as Mr. Jasper Dorrington had arrived, theirs would be private and on another day. I did not dare to inquire the reasons for this arrangement between such friends as our son and his fellow collegian, but the character of Mr. Stewart, what my daughter and I know of Isabel, the affection of Alice, and also some foregone slips with which we are acquainted, point to some offence on the part of Jasper into which I tremble to inquire

more particularly," and again Lady Dorrington took refuge in her handkerchief.

Sir Herbert looked very grave, then positively angry.

"Forged this must be looked into. Ah, now I see why young Stewart has been so shy of coming up to the Hall. If Jasper has haunted either of these good people he shall apologise were he twenty times my son and the heir of Dorrington. Do you think this Luttrell has anything to do in this? I must find that out."

"But once his name has been mentioned; and then Isabel implored, Alice to warn Jasper, as he valued his own name and honour, to break off all acquaintances and shun the company of Luttrell. More she dared not say."

"Enough: he shall not enter the doors of Dorrington on any pretence until these doubts are cleared up."

But Lottie, said he, folding the letter to his son, "this is a sorry way of welcoming our child's nuptials! We must not meet jolly Sir Piers with wet eyes and long faces. Cheer up. We'll break off this unfortunate intimacy, and restore our son to himself." He rang his table bell. "Here, Norris, these for the post-bag, and be off to the village. And give my compliments to Sir Piers and tell him I'll be glad of his company for a drive, and a call on the Pierreponts. I suppose, Lottie, you can't leave house and the milliner to-day? By-bye till we meet at dinner." And the jocular old man, saying his daughter Alice crossing the gallery in a morning dress, ran out, and catching the fresh young creature by both hands, gave her a hearty, paternal kiss, which the damsel as heartily returned, then escaped laughing into a room in which sat the milliner already spoken of, with three of the bridesmaids and a hired needlewoman. A peep into the apartment showed as much gauze, lace, orange-flowers, pink and blue ribbons, satins, silks, velvets, shippings, cuttings, trimmings, tulle, bobbing, and other materials and appliances of dressmaking as might set up a Bond Street establishment. Sir Herbert did peep in, held up his hands in affected astonishment, sent the bridesmaids into shouts of laughter at his comical inquiries into the mysteries of the paraphernalia, wished them well over it, and retreated to take the proposed drive over with Sir Piers Pomfret to personally bid the Pierreponts to the bridal festivities.

Vincent Luttrell was pacing the private room of the Hotel de Louvre.

His compressed lips and knitted brows showed a mind perturbed by conflicting anxieties.

He rang the bell, or rather pressed the table-gong, and Straps answered the summons.

That worthy wore a striped linen jacket, and looked flushed and perspiring.

"Straps, tell your master that, on second thoughts, I have decided to remain in Paris for a few days longer. Don't let me hinder you—are you in time for the express?"

"That's just what we've missed; we can't do it now, and it's no use till the night train," said Mr. Straps, in a tone by no means consonant with his usual civility of manner to his master's friend. Vincent Luttrell looked at him scrutinisingly.

"Straps, I shall not permit you to address me with impudently."

"Beg pardon," replied Straps, but still omitting the usual "sir," and by no means lowering his tone, "but you see I'm rather riled, 'cos it's along of waiting for other people we've run it so fine and lost it after all."

"And is that the cause of your impertinence?" asked Luttrell, incisively.

"I don't know about impertinence, but there's only one clear day as you may say, afore the young missus's wedding, and Mister Stewart's and Miss Isabel's," (Luttrell could not prevent an involuntary start) and if there'd bin time perhaps there might ha' bin a Mrs. Straps too, but that's doored, I'm afraid."

"Straps, you may leave the room."

Straps, giving a short duck of the head, did so, pulling the door to with a slam.

"What does that mean?" mused Vincent Luttrell; "there's no mistaking that. Has his master said something that has given that shrewd fellow the cue for impudency to me? I should think it must be so. And they'll go to-night." Again he scanned the bell.

"Waiter, a time-table of the North of France!" It was supplied instantly.

"Eleven hours, fifteen minutes a.m., via Boulogne and Folkestone—am—London about eight hours, tide serving. In England three or four hours before he starts from Paris. I had intended to have put that old set Fitz out of the way somehow, it would be easily done here with such a wad—but it must take time. Well, what can't be cured must be

endured. London to-night shall see me, Devonshire to-morrow. That will do."

And Vincent Luttrell hurried from the apartment.

In half an hour, with a travelling-bag in his hand and no other luggage, his pass duly signed and his ticket for London taken, Vincent Luttrell was on the "gare" of Le Chemin de fer du Nord, and a little over his calculated nine hours had left the South Eastern and arrived at the Great Western terminus at Paddington.

The night mail delivered him at an early hour at the little town near Clovenook, of which we have so often spoken.

Vincent Luttrell was much disguised. He wore a large light-coloured railway scarf of a common and vulgar pattern, carried a new railway rug bought at Paddington for three half-crowns, wore a soft billcock and brown greatcoat, and had his legs encased in buttoned overalls.

There was small chance of anybody immediately recognising the fashionable Vincent Luttrell in these habiliments.

"There's not much time to spare if I'm to extract any metal from the old working, and that must be done once and for all. This time, Vincent, you must really go to the far West and look up that Canadian couple on the St. Lawrence. They'll be only too glad to have their griefs renewed by certain tidings of the hero, when and where they lost their son and his young bride. Curious creatures we are; the more miserable I make them the more they'll pity me, and pity's akin to love, and so they'll love me—ha! ha!—as the last person who saw their son alive. I must 'exploit' them, as their countrymen on this side the hearing-gate call it, and then they for Chicago and perhaps New York, for, as at present arranged, I shall not return to England. My last visit to Deuton must be this night. The vicinity of Dorrington is too hot for me, and I shall make the relinquishment of all claims on the hand of Isabel the 'consideration' for an entire and final release of her father and the loan of one thousand pounds, to be repaid with interest at five per cent. when I return from America. That will do for the present. I'll fill in the details at a personal interview."

Vincent Luttrell dined in the town in a common public-house, took a fly in the afternoon to a place three miles from Rosemead, and, discharging it there, betook himself to a roadside alehouse to await the favouring shades of night.

Hugh Denton sat in his usual chair in his usual position, in the parlour of the pretty villa. His daughter was, as might be expected, up at the "great house," where the notes of busy preparation was long and continuous.

A singular foreboding took possession of his naturally melancholy mind. The visage of his persecutor seemed to obtrude itself even on his closed eyes. Is there, as those thoroughgoing spiritualists affirm, an immediate, a palpable, and a personal presence created by the meager magnetic currents of sympathy and antipathy, and are the spiritual entities that, like "coming events, cast their shadows before," proved substantive by those very shadows. We shall leave to crated metaphysicians the pursuit of such proofless assertions, suffice it to say that on this evening Hugh Denton, his delicate, nervous organisation somewhat overwrought by the unusual bustle of events (he had that day himself visited both the Hall and the Rectory), and the various agitations of the approaching marriage of his daughter, was unusually excitable. To his mind's eye, the departing figure of Luttrell again darkened the window, and his parting words rang clearly in his ear. What if he carried out his threat, in revenge for the frustration of his hopes, and his, Hugh Denton's, failure to perform the impossible conditions of that compulsory pact?

"Let it be so," thought Hugh Denton. "He may do his worst when once I have provided a protection for Isabel. I will defy him, yes, defy him, and appeal to the laws of my country, to whose decision I will submit, but never again to the thrall of—"

A shadow fell across the window, the handle turned silently; Hugh Denton looked up: his eyes met those of Vincent Luttrell!

"I hope my visit is not malapropos, friend Hugh. But it must, I am sorry to say, be unusually brief. The shipwreck of which you heard, occasioned the loss of year little rate in aid of my start in the New World, and enforced my return to the Old. I had hoped, friend Hugh—pray listen attentively"—(Hugh Denton's face resembled that of "Horror" in Fuseli's drawings of "The Passions," as Vincent Luttrell proceeded slowly)—"Yes, listen attentively, I am not exacting, were I so I should insist, after our solemn agreement, upon taking Isabel with me as a wife to the New World, but I am not. Hugh Denton,

I am afraid you misinterpret me. I wish your happiness, and if my everlasting absence can assure it to you, this is the last time I shall meet you face to face."

Hugh Denton felt the old sinking come over him at the cold, mocking tones of his Mephistopheles.

"Why should you misunderstand your best friend? I am about to release you from your agreement, to leave your daughter free to marry whomever she pleases, and not as a compensation but as a compliment and a mark of your friendship. I shall take, 'my poverty and not my will consenting,' a draft for one thousand pounds, merely to replace the money lost by that unhappy shipwreck. You do not speak? Am I to have it and instantly, or—"

Hugh Denton once again felt himself powerless to resist the cool, undaunted will and purpose of his subject.

"My time is precious—here are the writing materials," and Vincent produced a small blotting-pad in leather, with a steel pen between its edges, and took an inkstand from an adjacent table.

(To be continued.)

THE SCIENCE OF HEALTH.

THE last report by the Registrar-General of Births, Death, and Marriages, though presented to the public in the uninviting shape of a thick blue-book, yet contains an introduction as full of interest as it is of importance, for it is nothing else than a comprehensive treatise on what we ought to do individually, municipally and nationally, to keep ourselves healthy and strong, and to prolong the duration of life by checking or preventing disease. Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true that, in spite of all our efforts during the past century, and in spite of improved medical skill, the average of human life has not been augmented in any perceptible degree.

The reasons for this are numerous, and some are not far to seek. Thus, the population crowds continually more and more from the country districts into the towns. Twenty years ago there were 580 towns in England; now there are 938. Again, the imbecile, the drunkard, the lunatic, the criminal, and all tainted natures, were once allowed to perish in fields, asylums, or jails; but now these classes and their offspring figure in large numbers in the population. These are the weakly animals which lower the general vigour of the stock. With these and other causes before us to explain why what we have accomplished towards improving our hygiene has not borne so much fruit as we had hoped, we may still look forward encouragingly to the future.

If we persevere, better results will begin to show at last. Life has a pecuniary value, and thus every death averted, every accident warded off, can be set down approximately at so much clear gain to the nation in pounds, shillings, and pence. Thus, in the production and education of a human being a certain amount of capital is sunk for a longer or shorter time, and that capital with its interest reappears in the wages of the labourer, the pay of the officer, and the income of the professional man. At first it is all expenditure, and a certain necessary expenditure goes on to the end to keep life in being even when it has ceased to be productive.

Take at birth the cost of future maintenance, and then the value of future earnings; an agricultural labourer will thus be worth £246 at twenty-five years of age, or £117 when he is still only ten years old. At fifty-five he is worth £138, £1 at seventy, and at eighty the cost of maintenance, there being no earnings, is £41. Far more capital has been sunk in the education of a professional man, at greater risk, and likely to remain much longer invested before it yields a return. Such persons attain their maximum value at about forty; and in the highest professions, where experience and great weight of character are requisite, the life still augments in pecuniary value as years advance.

In London, the death-rate among males—especially artisans—after the age of thirty-five, is exceptionally high, and the reason for this is not yet known. Some allege that London operatives wash and bathe much less than the working people in provincial towns. Publicans, butchers, and fishmongers die off considerably faster than men in other trades. Farmers and agricultural labourers are among the healthier classes. Exercise both of the muscles and of the brain is, however, all-important to preserve the due balance of health. The extensive tension of brain, heart, lungs, or digestive organs, due to over-training, is, of course, a deviation from the natural healthy state of a man's constitution, and is therefore to be avoided; but the regular, and, we might almost say, routine-like, habits of the practised athlete do much to promote general soundness and vigour both in the individual himself and in his children.

A daily walk of twenty miles represents about the amount of exertion which a full-grown male of average power, resting on Sundays, might go through with benefit to himself. A soldier in war carrying 60 lbs. marches fourteen miles comfortably, a London policeman travels sixteen to twenty miles in eight and a-half hours. Many children are overworked; many women are overworked in pregnancy and are under-fed too. Domestic servants are exceptionally healthy, because they work moderately and are well-fed, but when they marry and have children they are forced to subsist on a lower diet. Girls at school, through want of outdoor play, are less healthy than boys. For every death we may reckon two years of sickness; thus if a million persons die in the year, two millions more have been uninterruptedly sick during the same period.

The problem is how to mitigate these evils, and science seems to tell us in every direction that good water, pure atmosphere, effective sewerage, healthy dwellings, personal cleanliness and exercise, and recreation for body and mind, are the objects to be kept steadily in view.

SCIENCE.

A NEW printing ink is prepared by first dissolving iron in sulphuric, hydrochloric, or acetic acid. Half the solution is oxidized by means of nitric acid, after which the two halves are mixed, and precipitation is produced by oxide of iron. The precipitate is filtered, washed, and mixed with equal parts of tannic and gallic acid, which produces a black bordering on blue. The black is washed and dried, then mixed with linseed oil; and the ink obtained is suitable for either letterpress printing or lithography.

A NEW process for hardening zinc consists in pouring into the metal, while in a state of fusion, a proportion of sal ammonia varying from $\frac{3}{4}$ to 7 ozs. per 2·2 lbs. according to the degree of hardness required. Metal thus prepared can be worked with the file and the lathe, and may, in many cases, serve as a substitute for bronze.

A NEW mode of waterproofing woollen materials consists in boiling 4½ ozs. white soap in 2½ gallons water. Heat these solutions to 180° Fah. and pass the fabric through the soap bath and afterwards through the alum solution. Dry in the open air.

To detect grape and cane sugar in glycerin: Mix 5 drops of glycerin with 103 to 123 drops of water, 1 drop of nitric acid, and half a grain molybdate of ammonia and heat. If sugar is present, the mixture turns to an intensely blue colour.

DETECTION OF ADULTERATION IN WINE.—Professor H. Vogel states that the simplest method of detecting adulteration in wine, especially in regard to the colouring matter, is by means of the spectroscope. The apparatus required is as inexpensive as the operations are simple. Professor Vogel employed for the purpose a pocket spectroscope which cost in Berlin 36 mark. The instrument is first directed towards the blue sky, or to its reflection in a mirror, clamped in a horizontal position in a report holder, and the slit closed until the principal Fraunhofer lines, C, D, E, F, G, and a few intermediate lines are distinct. The liquids to be studied are put into square white bottles about 0·30 inch thick, and placed before the slit. It is well known that many substances of similar colour have produced very unlike absorption spectra, while others, which are very different chemically, have very similar absorption spectra, like chloride of iron and tincture of iodine. These facts are no objection to spectral analysis by absorption. It resembles analysis by polarization, which cannot be employed for all substances; but where it can be used, it is invaluable.

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

ONE of the most demoralizing practices of modern refinement is the "large party" system. People cram their houses with respectable mobs; thus conforming to a ridiculous custom.

Rousseau, with all his aberrations of mind, said: "I had rather have my house too small for a day than too large for a twelvemonth."

Fashion exactly reverses the maxim; and domestic mischief is often begun with a large dwelling and suitable accommodations.

The misfortune consists in this, that we never look below our level for an example, but always above it. It is not so much, however, in the mere appearances kept up, as in the means taken to keep them up, that the fruitful cause of immorality is to be found. A

man, having assumed a class status, runs all risk to keep it up. It is thought to be a descent in the world to abridge oneself of a superfluity.

The seeming-rich man, who drives his close carriage and drinks Champagne, will not tolerate a descent to a gig and plain beer; and the respectable man, who keeps his gig, would think it a degradation to have to travel afoot or in a 'bus between his country house and his town office.

They will descend to immorality rather than descend in apparent rank; they will yield to dishonesty rather than yield up the mock applause and hollow respect of that big idiot, "the world."

Everybody can call to mind hundreds of cases of men, "respectable men," who from one extravagance have gone on to another, wantonly squandering wealth which was not theirs, in order to keep up a worldly reputation, and cut a figure before their admiring fellows; all ending in a sudden smash, a frightful downfall, an utter bankruptcy, to the ruin, perhaps, of thousands.

They have finished up with paying a respectable dividend of sixpence in the pound! Indeed, it is not too much to say that five-sixths of the fraud and swindling that disgrace commercial transactions have had their origin in the diseased morality of "keeping up appearances."

To be "respectable," in the false sense of the word, what is not sacrificed? Peace, honesty, truth, virtue—all to keep up appearances.

We must cheat, and scrub, and deceive, and defraud, that "the world" may not see behind our mask! We must torment and enslave ourselves, because we must extort "the world's" applause, or at least obtain "the world's" good opinion! How often is suicide traceable to this false sentiment! Vain men will give up their lives rather than their class notions of respectability.

They will cut the thread of existence, rather than cut fashionable life. Very few suicides are committed from real want.

"We never hear," says Joel Barlow, "of a man committing suicide for want of a loaf of bread; but it is often done for want of a coach."

Of this mean and miserable spirit of class and caste women are the especial victims. They are generally brought up with false notions of life, and are taught to estimate men and things rather by their external appearances than by their intrinsic worth. Their education is conducted mainly with the view of pleasing and attracting the admiration of others, rather than of improving and developing their qualities of mind and heart.

They are imbued with notions of exclusiveness, fashion, and gentility. A respectable position in society is held up to them as the mark to be aimed at. To be criminal or vicious is virtually represented to them as far less horrible than to be "vulgar." Immured within the bastille of exclusivism, woman is held captive to all the paltry shifts and expedients of convention, fashion, gentility, and so forth.

The genuine benevolence of her nature is perverted; her heart becomes contracted; and the very highest sources of happiness, those which consist in a kindly sympathy with humanity in all ranks of life, are as a wall shut up and a fountain sealed.

WHY SHE LEFT OFF HOUSEKEEPING.

"I LEFT off housekeeping," said my friend, "because I was tired of being reproached. Oh, you need not look astonished. That is the only word for it."

The life of a housekeeper is just one long endurance of reproaches—nothing more.

There is always something wrong about a house, especially where there is a large family; and the nominal head of it is always supposed to have been able to keep it right.

"Whether the chimney has had draughts, or the parlour shades tumble down; whether the dinner is not well cooked, or the butter is bad, that wretched female known as the lady of the house is supposed to be guilty of it; though if everything goes right, she has no credit at all: it is only as it should be.

"The cook's faults are hers. A person with wonderful references, and more astounding airs, takes possession of the kitchen, and proves herself incapable of boiling a potatoe. The 'lady of the house' suffers not only with the rest, but from the rest of the family. She is supposed to have chosen the cook. It is presumed that she ordered the beef to be the burnt-offering, or the gory spectacle, that it arrives at the table; and nobody pities her.

"So when the laundress presents 'the master' with collars which would appear to have been 'washed in the dish-basin and dried on a gridiron,' his natural reproaches do not fall upon Mrs. Swasher. He says to the partner of his soul, 'Jane Maria, how can you permit this?'

"It is no more possible for Jane Maria to sit in the kitchen and watch the cook, or look into the tub at which Mrs. Swisher works, than it was for her lord and master to trot at the heels of the dishonest clerk who made off with the funds he collected for the firm.

"But people sympathise with him, and no one sympathises with Jane Maria, who, with nursing sick children and other duties, was obliged to trust the washing and cooking to people who were paid to do it. No! the husband of her heart, her friends and neighbours, and the young men who write books of advice to their grandmothers, all reproach her.

"It's no use trying to explain how it is, either," said my friend. "One would then be reproached for not receiving one's husband with a smile."

So I've gone to boarding, and poor Mrs. Furgeson gets all the reproaches that are deserved by everybody, and I escape for awhile.

M.D.K.

THE HOUSE THAT JOHN DAMA BUILT.

"Yes, it's very fine," said John Dama, in answer to the remark of a friend, "but wait till you see my house."

"Ah! Then you are going to build?"

"I am."

"Where?"

"I'll show you."

A few minutes afterwards, Mr. Dama drew up his splendid pair of bays, and pointing to a large, old-fashioned house, beautifully situated on an eminence that sloped down in long reaches and graceful undulations to a small lake, from which flowed a stream that the eye could trace for a mile away until it lost itself in a broad river, said:

"I am going to build on the spot where that house stands. I've been waiting over three years for its owner to get where he'd be obliged to sell, so that I could buy the place at my own figures. I saw that he was drifting to leeward, and that he would strand ere long, or go to pieces on the rocks. So I held off, knowing the time must come when he would be forced to sacrifice this old homestead, which has been in the family for nearly a century. You know how it is; when times are easy, property holds its own in the market, and if you buy you have to pay about all it is worth; but when a pinch comes, and many owners of real estate are forced to sell in order to raise money for business purposes, prices are apt to fall off heavily. We are in just such a pinch now, as you are aware; and this man's necessity has become my opportunity. Yesterday the title of his splendid old estate passed to me, and to-day I would not accept one thousand pounds advance on my bargain."

John Dama was a happy man, or thought himself so.

He had long envied his neighbour the possession of this property, and now it was his own. Why should he not be happy?

"I would drive you through the place," said Mr. Dama, "but the late owner has asked, as a special favour, that while his family remain, which will be for a month, they shall be free from all intrusion. Some people have this weakness, you know."

And Mr. Dama shrugged his shoulders, while a look of mock compassion flitted across his face.

"I am sorry for them," he added, in an indifferent tone, "but it's their misfortune, and there are plenty to keep them company. The place has been running to seed these ten years, and it is time it passed into better hands. The march of improvement does not stop, and if people stand in its way, they have to go down. A man has no right to hold on to a piece of property like that if he isn't able to improve it. He mars the beauty of the whole neighbourhood."

"You will build magnificently?"

"Wait and see," returned Mr. Dama, with a proud toss of his head.

"The site is one of the finest in the neighbourhood."

"The very finest," said Mr. Dama. "And the house shall be the finest. I never do things by halves, and never count myself second to any man."

It was in this spirit that John Dama set to work to build the house in which he thought to dwell; and, to do him credit, he did build magnificently; so that his splendid residence eclipsed the most costly and elegant to be found in the neighbourhood.

But it happened with him, as it happens with most men who build ambitiously.

Never, in any true sense, did he live in this house which had cost him so much thought, and care, and money.

Its halls were spacious, its rooms large and high, its furniture like that of a king's palace; but he could never make it really his own, because it was not in correspondence with his true inner life, which was selfish, narrow, and mean.

When Mr. Dama saw, from a distance, his palace-home standing out against the sky in all its grand and tasteful proportions, and felt a glow of satisfaction warming his breast, his pleasure was not grounded in any love of beauty or art, but in pride.

It was not from outward things that his nature was stirred, but from the admiring voices of men heard in his thoughts.

When he walked amid the rare and costly adornments with which he had surrounded himself, the pictures and statuary, the rich furniture and mirrors, they did not speak to anything responsive in his soul, but only awakened a dull feeling of pride.

He was their possessor, and because of this he gloried in them.

Before a year went by it came to pass that Mr. Dama lived for a small part of his time in his home, which he had built so grandly.

True, his body was there—his outer man—but the real John Dama, in his conscious living and thinking self, dwelt in another and very different home—one not set up by masons and carpenters, at his bidding, but built, stone on stone, with his own hands.

The furniture was not made by skilled workmen; nor did its pictures and ornaments grow under the magic hands of world-renowned artists.

All was the creation of John Dama himself, and in every smallest thing a representative of the quality of his life.

It was in this home, which he had built up and adorned, that Mr. Dama really dwelt.

How poor, and mean, and narrow it was! Why? Because, as to the life of his affections, which is every man's true life, he was narrow and mean.

There was no largeness of sentiment about him: nothing broad; the circle of his interests was too small to really include another.

He lived in the poor little world of self, and not in the magnificent world of humanity, wherein every man who will may enter and abide.

One day, it was three years from the time we presented John Dama to the reader, he sat with a friend in one of the broad piazzas that surrounded his residence.

Before them stretched a green lawn, smooth as a carpet, and richly adorned with the choicest flowers and shrubbery.

Beyond the ground fell off into a picturesque valley, in the bosom of which rested a beautiful lake, its surface gleaming like burnished silver, and beyond this rose wooded hills.

A few miles away, seen through a break in these hills, lay the city, with its hundred spires and towers revealed against a cloudless sky.

It was early summer, and nature was in one of her loveliest moods.

"This is perfect!" exclaimed the friend, as he felt the beauty of the scene. "You are living in paradise, Mr. Dama."

"I know of nothing finer," responded the gratified owner, a little motion of pride stirring the surface of his feelings. But the smile that flitted over his face faded off quickly.

"It is simply perfect!" the friend expressed anew his admiration.

"No, not perfect. It would be if—"

Mr. Dama turned his eyes to a bit of woods, through which a cool vista opened.

Beyond this the view was obstructed by the plain walls of a large brick house.

"When I bought this place," said Mr. Dama, "you had, instead of that horrid red pile of bricks and mortar, a view, now hidden, of distant hills crowded with elegant villas. It is all shut off now. I had a landscape gardener employed for a year, and the opening of that vista through the trees, so as to give one the charming view beyond, was his best work on my estate. I'll never forgive the man that built that house. Never, sir! I'll owe him a grudge as long as I live."

Mr. Dama's face grew red with anger.

"Don't look in that direction," answered his friend. "There's beauty enough everywhere else to satisfy the heart."

"I can't help it. I can't see anything else now. It stands out as plainly before me when my eyes are shut as when they are open. It is marring everything."

"Plant trees in the vista, and let it be as before. In a short time they will grow up, and this house will be hidden from your sight."

"Wait twenty years."

"Cut another opening through the woods, and get your beautiful view again."

"To have another wretch shut it away with some architectural monstrosity! No, sir! I give it up!"

"What then?" asked the friend. "Is all this perfection to go for nothing because of a blemish at a single point?"

"I cannot say. As things are now, the charm of the place has departed from my eyes. This flaw in my jewel has so lessened its beauty that its excellence is gone."

"I'm sorry. But you'll get over this. There is so much to allure the eye and gratify the taste in and around your lovely home that you will soon forget the flaw."

"Impossible! If a finger were broken from the hand of that Hebe, do you think I could ever again look at the statue without seeing that blemish? No, sir! It is my nature! Things marred, or out of harmony, always disturb me. I am troubled by defect more than I am charmed by beauty."

A shadow of uneasiness and discontent settled over the man's face.

He was the legal owner of this wonderfully beautiful estate—a paradise in itself—but not its possessor in any true sense. He did not live in it except as to his body.

His soul had other surroundings, true representatives of his inner life, which was, as we have before said, narrow and mean; for he lived for his little self alone, and not broadly and generously for humanity.

On the walls of the chambers of the house in which he really dwelt were no lovely pictures; the windows did not open upon cultivated gardens and charming landscapes.

No spacious halls ran through it. It was dreary within, and the ground barren without.

One room, and that in which he dwelt for most of his time, was lined with mirrors that gave him multiplied reflections of himself.

He liked this room best of all, because, whenever he entered it, self was exalted, and he saw how great and important a man he was.

No one else, in all the world, was reflected in these mirrors; and so he thought of none else, except as born to serve him, or minister in some way to his inordinate self-regard.

There was scarcely a man, or woman, or child, living in sight of Mr. Dama's lovely home, who did not have in it a more real ownership than he who had built it.

Its beauties, so rarely seen now by his blinded eyes, delighted and refreshed them day by day.

Its loveliness was reflected into the souls of hundreds, giving them sweet satisfactions.

Mr. Dama, though he knew it not, had built for others more than for himself; and others took possession and enjoyed, while he, alien-like, wandered listlessly and discontented through the richly-furnished apartments and about the perfect grounds, possessing and enjoying nothing.

As the years went by, and Mr. Dama grew narrower, and meaner, and more selfish in spirit, his soul withdrew itself entirely from the palace-home which his pride had created; though, as to the outer man, he still dwelt where art and taste made all things exquisite.

Day by day, beautiful things spread themselves out before him and allured his senses, but he saw them not.

They passed him as a moving panorama in which he had no life-interest, and faded from the retina like objects not really seen, and therefore not reported to the mind.

And the reason was plain. He had no pure love of the beautiful.

He was simply a lover of himself; and the beauty with which he had surrounded himself was for the eyes of his fellow-men, that they might see and admire, or envy him, he did not care which.

Like all other men, Mr. Dama lived in the house his affections had built, and because these were narrow and mean, and not broad and generous, this house was of small dimensions, and poor and comfortless.

It was not a happy home; but as it answered in all things to his inner life, through which it had been created, he could not really live anywhere else, and was restless and dissatisfied whenever he went out therefrom.

He had friends and companions here who were rarely, if ever, seen in the splendid home his ambitious, social pride had set up so grandly in the eyes of men.

They were contempt of others, self-worship, hatred, and ill-will.

A remarkable thing about this unseen house which Mr. Dama had built, and of whose existence few had any knowledge, was the enduring character of the materials used, and the faithfulness of its workmanship. It was built to last for ever!

Even as the topmost stone was laid on the walls of his palace-home, the tooth of time, that gnaws on day and night, set itself to the work of sure destruction.

But Mr. Dama's real house, the one created out of

the substance of his affections, could never be touched by time or decay. Only as his affections changed could it change.

As he built in time, so it would remain to all eternity.

This was the remarkable thing about Mr. Dana's unseen house.

He might have built more largely and magnificently within than without, and made for his soul's eternal dwelling-place a princelier home than king or emperor had ever seen.

But self is the smallest and poorest thing in all the universe; and when self builds for self, it must needs build meanly.

As John Dana built so are we all building. The houses we set up in the eyes of the world are not our real homes; these may be smaller and humbler, or larger and more beautiful, according as we are lovers of self, or lovers of humanity.

The lover of self needs only a poor little place in which to hide himself, but the lover of humanity must build like a prince.

T. S. A.

REUBEN;

OR,

ONLY A GIPSY.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Don't trouble," said Mr. Normanby, sweetly. "A little bird"—and he waved his hand towards the secret cupboard with a strange glitter in his eyes—"comes and whispers these little realities in my ears, and they amuse me. I could tell you the secret history of half the men and women we shall meet at the Countess's fancy ball next week. A little bird, aquire, only a little bird!"

"Some traitor," muttered John Verner, thoughtfully.

"Very likely," admitted Mr. Normanby. "There are a surprising lot of Judases in the world. But to business, my dear sir. My terms, do you accept them?"

John Verner drew a long breath.

"I am powerless to refuse them," he said. "I am in your hands."

"And I assure you that you could not be in better," said Mr. Normanby; and he reached for his pocket-book.

John Verner watched him as if fascinated.

His movements were as quiet and subtle as a serpent's, and so utterly helpless did the gaunt, grim squire of Deane Mellow feel that he would have sat there staring all day had not Mr. Normanby released him from the spell by taking a paper from the pocket-book and handing it across.

"This," he said, "is a little document which I have drawn up on the chance of your acceptance of my humble services, and is as simple as A. B. C. I promise to pay Julius Normanby the sum of twenty thousand pounds, for value received, on the day of the marriage of my son, Morgan Verner, to Olive Seymour, the daughter of Sir Edward Seymour, of Dingley Hall? It is very simple, and requires just your signature."

And he drew an exquisite little silver inkstand towards his victim.

John Verner took the paper and looked at it hard and long.

Then he took the pen and toyed with it irresolutely, glancing beneath his brows at the calm face of his captor, who lounged back, watching him with careless curiosity.

"Do you find it difficult to sign?" said Mr. Normanby. "Pray don't violate your feelings. Don't affix your name to the simple little document if you entertain a decided repugnance to doing so. I have been thinking the matter over, and I think that I might do better with Sir Edward, and, perhaps, who knows, marry the heiress myself."

And he indulged in a soft, silvery laugh.

John Verner clenched his teeth and signed the paper.

Mr. Normanby displayed as anxiety to receive it, but let it remain upon the table while he drew another bottle of Burgundy from the cellar and slowly proceeded to tap it.

"Come," he said, "let us drink to our mutual success."

John Verner raised the glass with his trembling fingers and drained it.

"And now," he said, huskily and bitterly, "now that you have made your bargain and got your price what do you propose—what are those services which I have bought?"

"But not yet paid for," said Mr. Normanby, pleasantly. "They will manifest themselves in good time. Meanwhile go on in the virtuous path which you have been treading, and when my little bird

whispers to me I will tell you what to do. This fancy ball. Of course Sir Edward and Olive go?"

John Verner nodded.

"Then go too, and let Morgan go. We will all go, and I'll arrange a little plot which shall help us on. Leave it all in my hands; they are strong enough to mould things into shape. Another glass of wine?"

John Verner shook his head.

"No," he said; "I hear them coming. They were to call for me. Can I—dare I trust you?"

"You can't help it," laughed Mr. Normanby, with infinite relief. "Go, my dear sir, and prosper as such an upright, unmitigated villain deserves to do."

And as John Verner, with pale and sternly-agitated face, passed from the room the elegant Mr. Normanby waved his scented handkerchief as if he were driving a fend from his presence.

Then he returned to the room, looked the door, and, with a burst of low-toned laughter, touched the spring of the secret panel.

"Emerge, little bird, from thy cage," he cried, in Hebrew. "Oh, my father, is it not good sport to catch these Christian dogs and see them writhe in their efforts to escape the fangs of our dainty traps? Father and son in one morning! Forty thousand pounds—and the rest! Hush! Look here."

And he drew Ben Asa to the window.

"Get behind the curtain and peep out. See! that is Sir Edward, the amiable, good-hearted, weak-minded baronet, and that is the girl! By Heaven! she is too good to be sacrificed to such a hog as my dear friend Morgan! Look at her, father! Is she not beautiful? There is grace and witchery! See that superb smile to the crawling, wooden-faced rogue who has just left us! See those eyes! Ah, a beautiful creature! And think, my father, I—I, Raphael the Jew—have just sold her for forty thousand pounds!"

And, in an ecstasy of satisfaction, he dropped into the chair and—blew his nose.

It was the day before the Countess's great fancy ball, and the sun, which was shining rather markedly upon the parched grass of Hyde Park, lit up the meads and streams of Dingley with a rich, mellow light.

The fashionable world of London—Sir Edward and Olive among them—were fast asleep at the hour of six, but Reuben, the steward, was up and drinking in the pure air as he strolled round the house farm.

Sir Edward had not exaggerated when he said that the stewardship was a great responsibility, but, great as it was, Reuben welcomed it, for the amount of work curtailed thought, and healthy thought kept him from brooding upon the wild passion which had taken possession of him.

In the day he succeeded in driving the face and voice of Olive Seymour from him, but at night, when he was sitting in the little room of the lodge which had been set aside for him, the dream took possession of him and absorbed him.

Sir Edward had been in town a month, and Reuben had conducted affairs at Dingley without any mishap. The men were attached to him and assisted him, and his indomitable perseverance and untiring energy did the rest.

The month had dragged sometimes, and he had been conscious of a wild, almost irresistible longing for freedom, but he had resisted the desire and thought that he had overcome it.

This day, the one before the fancy ball, he rose and set about his work with his usual alacrity, but found that the desire for escape into some different atmosphere was particularly strong upon him. In truth, though he did not know it, it was the desire to look upon the beloved face which had held of him, and as he tramped about the place the vision of her beauty rose and seemed to beset him.

Breakfast was over, and, with a restless dissatisfaction, he wandered into the old wood.

As he entered it a man came running up to him, and, panting for breath, exclaimed:

"Master Reuben, old Dowell's farm have caught fire."

Away went Reuben on the wings of the wind, the man running by his direction to the house, to summon aid.

It was only too true, and the farmhouse, a rather important one, was almost to the ground before a pall of water could be thrown on, and at half-past ten Reuben stood in the centre of a small crowd contemplating a ruin.

What was to be done? Dowell, the farmer, came up with vast despair, the tears in his eyes.

"Sir Eddard ought to know of this, Mr. Reuben. I can't go—I've my family to look after. Can't you send some one?"

Reuben thought a moment.

"No," he said, suddenly. "Sir Edward is in town enjoying himself. A messenger or a letter would tell

him suddenly and would bring him home. There is no occasion for that. I will go myself."

"Thank ye, thank ye," said Farmer Dowell.

"And you'll explain that it was no fault of mine?"

"Yes," said Reuben; "and bring instructions to clear the ruin away and build a new farm before you know what has happened."

And, with a sympathetic grasp of the hand, he strode away.

A wild joy, which he tried in vain to suppress, came over him.

In a few hours he should be mar, perhaps see, his godsons.

With the utmost speed he changed his clothes and made the necessary arrangements, then, drinking a cup of coffee by way of breakfast, he stood by while his horse was saddled, answering questions to the very last moment, jumped on its back and galloped off.

As he entered a small lane, which was a near cut to the station, Brag, the horse, shied, and Reuben, looking round to discover the cause, saw a woman's head projecting before a break in the hedge.

The next moment the head came through, and the whole figure of Polly Styles was before him.

Reuben reined in, obeying a movement of her hand and a timid, shrinking call upon his name, and raised his hat.

Polly's pretty face was very pale, and looked as if its miseries had spent one sleepless night at least, if not more.

Reuben could see that she was endeavouring to appear unconcerned, though the hand which held the light shawl round her trembled visibly.

"Good morning," said Reuben.

"Good morning," said Polly, trembling, and with evident embarrassment. "Oh, Mr. Reuben, what a dreadful thing about the fire!"

"Yes," said Reuben, glancing stationwards impatiently. "But it might have been worse. There are no lives lost, and I know that that fact will reconcile Sir Edward to the loss of the farmhouse."

"You—you are going to London, Mr. Reuben?" said Polly, timidly.

"Yes," replied Reuben, quickly. "I have just got time to catch the train."

"You will see Sir Edward and Miss Olive, and—"

"I shall see Sir Edward, I hope, and possibly Miss Olive"—his face flushed a little—"but Mr. Verner—no, I am not sure of seeing him."

"Perhaps you will," said Polly. "Perhaps you might try, and—if you did, Mr. Reuben, would you mind giving him this little note for me. You are always so kind, or I wouldn't trouble you with it. I don't know his address, and—"

"Oh, I shall be very glad to play postman," said Reuben, taking the note, and inwardly wondering what Polly Styles could have to say to the master of the Grange.

Perhaps his face discovered a little of that surprise, for Polly, with an awkward attempt at coyness, her face crimson and pale by turns, said:

"It's about a—little puppy which Mr. Verner asked me to take care of until he came back, and—it's not very well, Mr. Reuben, and I thought perhaps I'd better write and let him know."

"Yes, yes," said Reuben, gathering the reins and turning his head towards the station. "I didn't know Squire Verner was that fond of dogs."

"No, no," exclaimed Polly, with sudden alarm; "it's not the Squire, but Mr. Morgan Verner!"

"Oh!" said Reuben, and his face clouded for a second. "Well, I will give it to him. Good-bye, Polly!" and he raised his hat with his short, pleasant smile and tore off.

At the end of the lane there came another interruption.

This time from Farmer Styles himself, who, as Reuben came tearing up, touched his hat and chuckled and winked.

Reuben half pulled up.

"Ah! ah!" said Farmer Styles. "Been saying 'good-bye,' eh? Quite right! quite right! She's afraid you'll forget her among the grand town ladies, my lad! But you won't do that, Reuben, eh? Hah! hah! I saw you!"

Reuben coloured, and grew hot with annoyance. There was some stupid muddle somewhere, but it was quite evident that he would not stop there and explain. Farmer Styles would wait an hour's argument, and would be in a worse muddle than before perhaps.

So, contenting himself and shaking his head, Reuben tore on; and the farmer, taking the shake to mean that Reuben would not forget Polly, went on his way chuckling and satisfied.

Fast as the train certainly went, it did not seem to go fast enough for Reuben.

At last it reached London, and for the first time Reuben stood in the great city.

At another time he would have been filled with amazement and curiosity, but now the absorbing nature of one subject made him insensible to the

magnitude and magnificence of the modern Babylon.

He inquired his way to Park Lane, and after a little deviation and confusion of streets found it.

A servant opened the door, and, on Reuben's inquiry, stated that Sir Edward and Miss Seymour had gone down to Brighton, and would not be back until the next day.

Reuben hesitated a moment, thinking he would leave his name; but decided that Sir Edward would be alarmed with an idea that something serious had happened at home.

"I will call again," he said, and civilly raised his hat.

The girl who had opened the door in the absence of the porter, who had for his part taken a holiday, said:

"What name shall I say, sir—Mr. Verner?"

"Verner!" said Reuben, with a sudden start, he knew not whether of pleasure or pain. "Verner—no!"

"I'm sure I beg your pardon," said the girl, in confusion; "I thought, perhaps, seeing you—for you are something like the old gentleman, Mr. Verner—that you might be a relation."

"No, I am no relation," said Reuben, coldly; "I will not leave my name, but call again."

"Well," exclaimed the girl to a fellow-servant who had been listening, "I did not think that was one of those Verners, may I never have a new bonnet. But he was too good looking and nice speaking for them after all. I wonder who he is—a gentleman every inch of him, though he does wear country clothes."

Reuben meanwhile had retraced his steps, and stood in a large thoroughfare, looking this way and that, wondering what he should do.

As he stood looking thoughtfully at the pavement a piece of paper blew across his feet, and he stopped to pick it up.

With surprise Reuben found that it was a card for a fancy ball at the Countess Prettywell's on the following evening.

There was a name attached, but so badly written that it might serve for any other, and Reuben, as he put the card in his pocket, smiled as he thought.

"A fancy ball! What if, holding this ticket, I were to go!"

He put the idea away as too absurd to be entertained, and sought for some quiet hotel where he could get a bed for the night.

He found one without much difficulty, and quite tired out, ate some supper, and retired for a night's rest.

In the morning he awoke with a start; the noise and confusion in the street reminded him of that old time, long, long back, when the roar of the fair rang in his ears.

Dressing himself he went into the street, looking at everything with wondering eyes.

It all seemed like a vision in a dream to him, and it was not until he stood at the door of the house in Park Lane, that he seemed to awake and realize his position.

"Sir Edward has not come home yet," said the porter.

"And won't come home to-day," added an important-looking individual, the butler of the establishment.

"I've just got my orders to say that Sir Edward and Miss Seymour will dress at their cousin's, and go from there to the ball."

"The ball!" said Reuben.

"Yes, sir," replied the butler, "The Countess's fancy ball. Both Sir Edward and Miss Seymour are going; it will be a grand affair, sir."

"Yes," said Reuben, absently.

"Will you leave any message?" asked the butler.

"No," said Reuben; "I must call again, and take my chance."

The ball!

The very ball to which he held a ticket of admission!

How could he with any heart step in with his bad news just as they were starting for an evening's enjoyment?

"No," he mused, "I will wait until to-morrow; it can do no harm, and nothing would be gained by making Sir Edward unhappy this evening."

Then a thought flashed across his mind.

"His news travels fast! Suppose some gossip, having heard a stray piece of the truth, should chatter it in Sir Edward's ear, to-night—tell him, perhaps, that the ball itself was burnt down! And there being no one there to deny it, Sir Edward would credit the story!"

This dread was followed by another thought.

"Suppose, disguised in some costume, I went to the ball and kept near Sir Edward; if the news reached him I should be at hand to allay any unnecessary alarm!"

No longer had the suggestion presented itself, than Reuben determined to act upon it.

He took the ticket from his pocket, and scanned it once more.

Yes, it was a pass to the ball, and he could avail himself of it.

He called a cab, and explained that he wanted to purchase a costume.

The cabman touched his hat confidently, and drove to a well-known costumer in Bow Street.

"Here you are, sir; shall I wait?"

"Yes," said Reuben, and entered the shop.

Almost before he had explained what he wanted, the shopman broke in:

"Oh, yes, sir; for the Countess's ball, I suppose. Yes, certainly. Have you chosen a character, sir?"

"No," said Reuben. "I am not particular; any costume will do, that will disguise me."

"Yes; I see," said the man, and he stepped back and scanned Reuben's staid figure. "I should suggest a 'Black Knight,' said the man. 'You have just the figure for it, and you could wear a mask or a visor; a long, black Crusade cloak would conceal your figure when you require to do so, and altogether the costume would be most suitable.'"

"That will do," said Reuben, and the man proceeded to select and fit on the necessary costume.

One thing rather surprised him, and that was Reuben's apparent ease in this strange dress.

"You are used to costumes, sir?" said the man.

"Yes," said Reuben; and he smiled as he thought of the old times, when in tinsel and spangles, he had played in the gipsies' travelling theatre.

"Oh!" said the shopman. "I thought so, sir; you wear 'em as if they came natural. It suits you, sir, very well. You've hit upon the very thing!"

"You have, I think," said Reuben, with a smile, as he paid the deposit; and the man, with obliging civility, packed the costume, and placed it in the cab.

With a sign of satisfaction, Reuben returned to his hotel, and sat down to think.

As the clock struck ten, Reuben, in the character of the "Black Knight," with his cloak wrapped round him, stepped into a cab, and with a heart which, though it beat with a little excitement, knew nothing of doubt or hesitation, was borne towards the Countess's mansion.

The cab pulled up, one of a long line of carriages which was moving slowly in front of a magnificent new building in one of the principal squares.

A blaze of light poured from the windows, and lit up the green square.

Hosts of servants in gorgeous liveries crowded on the pavement, and rushed to and fro.

Two marshals with gold staffs ushered the guests as they arrived into the hall, where others conducted them to the brilliant saloons.

With an utter feeling of bewilderment which literally bonumbed him for the moment, Reuben found himself standing in the hall, surrounded by a motley crowd of apparently every race and time: here a Roman emperor, there an Italian peasant girl; beside her a woman in green scales and tail, and in close conversation with three nuns, a cavalier of the time of Charles the First.

Laughter and chatter rang around him; the most bewildering confusion of character dazzled and yet delighted him.

Drawing a little apart, he determined to watch a few more of the arrivals before entering the saloon.

A small body entered together a few moments later; each endeavouring to guess at the identity of the other, and all laughing at the mistakes and wild conjectures.

Suddenly a lady came up to him and tapped him with her fan.

"Ah, Marquis! Capital! Very good, indeed, but I should know you by the moustache!" and the lady laughed with a silvery merriment.

Reuben bowed, and before he could speak the lady rattled on:

"You know me, I saw, by the way you looked when I came in. Lord Dorchester is there by the chair; and what's Lady Bakewell as Queen Mary. Oh! isn't that magnificent!" she broke off to exclaim, as the marshal ushered in a party which had just arrived.

"Will you not join us?" she asked, glancing up at the only part of Reuben's face which was visible.

"I fear I dare not presume so far upon your condescension, fair lady!" said Reuben, with a grim smile. "I am not fit for whom you take me."

The lady uttered a low cry, and snatched her arm away, and she sped across the hall to her own party, who welcomed her with amused laughter at her own expense.

Then suddenly the throng became denser, and, as there burst out a prelude to a popular waltz, a movement was made for the stairs.

Reuben plunged into the stream and was taken with it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE scene which met Reuben's eye as he entered the grand saloon bore description.

Imagine the costumes and the great and famous people who moved in them jumbled together in a chaotic, but brilliant medley—here a Red-Cross knight in armour and white burnouse; there a Joan of Arc; a King Richard; a Francis de Ascani, in monkish cowl, and beside him, in close converse, a Roman Empress.

Reuben was for the moment confused and dazzled. Dazzled by the music and the brilliance of the ever-moving throng, and confused by the strange, mysterious mask which hid the upper part of each face.

A sudden thrill ran through him as he felt the intense solitude which falls upon him who moves in a mass and knows no part of it.

Where was Olive and Sir Edward?

He scanned each black face as it passed him, and scrutinized each figure but could not detect them.

His spirits, which had risen with the first burst of music, fell again.

"She is not here," he thought; "I should know her through any disguise; I should know her. She is not here." As he turned aside, half intending to leave the saloon and return to the hotel, a gentleman, in the costume of a Corsican peasant, touched him on the shoulder.

"Not dancing, my lord? I'd advise you to have a turn before the room gets too crowded. Wonderful success this is going to be, I know. They tell me that half the people have come up to town for it."

Reuben nodded, and, taking his unknown friend's advice, turned to a lady who stood near him and asked for her hand.

She glanced up curiously, and nodded with a smile, and Reuben encircled her waist; it must be confessed not without a quiver of doubt.

He had danced in the gipsy camp and in the gipsy stage waltzes, quadrilles, and the rest of the dances in fashion, but whether he could keep time and tune with proper precision to a grand band was doubtful.

He found to his surprise that the waltzing of the camp was like that of the ball room, and soon was spinning round the room with the rest; much to his secret amusement.

As they paused for breath, his partner, leaning on his arm, looked up.

"I have been trying to guess whom you may be," she said.

"And I have been singularly employed!" said Reuben.

"It is capital fun, this mystery, is it not?" said the lady, as a burst of laughter at some case of mistaken identity rang out beside them. "Everybody is puzzled, as is everybody else. Do you know who I am?"

"No," said Reuben, "I cannot hazard a conjecture."

"I will exchange confidences," said the lady, with a laugh. "Stay, let me guess. Now, you guess first!"

"Ah, my lord!" said some one passing them at the moment, and nodding amiably at Reuben. Reuben's partner laughed.

"The secret is half out!" she said. "You are a lord, Viscount Collington!"

"No," said Reuben, "spare your guesses, fair lady; I am a stranger to you as you are to me!"

"You will not unmask?" said the lady, evidently very curious.

"Not at present, if you will pardon me?" said Reuben. "I have my reasons. I will not ask you to do so either, though I am not without curiosity."

"Men never are," said the lady, lightly, and they whirled away again, and did not stop until the waltz was over.

Then Reuben, who though ignorant of the etiquette of the ball room, was endowed with natural politeness, led the fair unknown to a seat, and stood beside her.

"It is delightful!" she said. "This is my first fancy ball."

"And mine?" said Reuben, rather quickly, his eyes wandering round the room.

"Is it?" she said. "I am enjoying it so much. It is so fresh and charming. Oh, look! there is a grand costume! What character is it?"

Reuben looked towards the door and saw a tall figure dressed in a crimson and black tight-fitting costume which he recognised at once as Mephistopheles.

It was an extremely suitable one for the person who had assumed it; the air and gait being just those one ascribes to that of the Satanic demon.

"It is Mephistopheles," he said.

The lady laughed.

"No, not that one—the gentleman with him."

"That," said Reuben, "is Romeo, brilliant in white and pale-blue satin."

"He is too short for Romeo!" said the lady. "But, see, who are these?" and she nodded towards another couple who had just entered—the one, a gentleman



[THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER.]

in the simple garb of a Puritan; the other, a lady in the dress of a Spanish lady of rank. "There, I think that is the most striking dress I have seen. It becomes her, too, so well!"

Reuben remained silent, his eyes fixed upon the new arrivals, his heart beating.

He knew the tall, lithe figure, and the turn of the graceful head.

He wanted but to hear the voice. "Do you know them?" asked the lady, looking up at his fitting eyes curiously.

"No," said Reuben, "I think not. The Puritan is a capital disguise."

"But the lady?" asked his partner. "Don't you think her good?"

"Yes," said Reuben, scarcely knowing what he said; "yes, very good."

Then, as the lady was about to speak, a monk approached, and claimed her for the next dance, and Reuben was free.

Wrapping his cloak around him, he slipped behind a pillar and waited the approach of the Spanish donna.

With graceful undulating step she came, leaning upon the arm of her companion, and they stopped beside the pillar against which Reuben leaned.

"Now, if she will but speak," he thought and longed.

But the two stood silent, seemingly wrapped in the gay scene.

Suddenly from behind him a voice said:

"Hush! here they are."

He half turned and saw Mephistopheles and Romeo both with their eyes fixed upon the Puritan and his companion.

Reuben slowly moved away to a little distance, and watched and waited.

He saw Mephistopheles approach with softly gliding step to the Spanish lady and speak.

She turned with a start and a smile.

"Ah, you know me!" said Mephistopheles.

Reuben waited, his heart almost standing still.

"Yes, by your voice," said the lady.

It was Olive!

Then up came Romeo.

"Let me introduce a friend," said Mephistopheles.

"I know him," said the Puritan; "it is Mr. Morgan Verner."

"Right!" exclaimed Mephistopheles, striking an attitude; "and I am—"

"Mr. Normanby!" said Olive.

"I claim you for the next dance by the rule of the ball!" said Morgan, with deferential delight.

"What rule?" said Olive, with surprise.

"The rule that says he who recognises a lady may claim her as partner, unless she be otherwise engaged," replied Morgan, laughing softly.

Olive blushed, and hesitated a moment. Then she took his arm, and they walked off talking.

Reuben's face grew stern and rigid. He could not have stood and watched her dancing with Morgan Verner if his life depended on it.

With a sigh that was almost a jealous groan, he strode quickly to another part of the room, asking himself bitterly what right he had there among his superiors!

The misery he endured was his rightful punishment for intruding upon the society of the gods. He determined to leave at once.

As he made for the door, a servant met him bearing a tray of wine.

He stopped and offered a glass, and Reuben, scarcely knowing what he was doing, took it and drank the contents.

It was Champagne, and it put a strange sort of courage into him.

With a sudden impulse he turned and retraced his steps.

"No!" he muttered, "I will see it out, come what will."

A dance was just beginning, and he took a partner.

It was a quadrille, and again Reuben found that he could hold his own.

His spirits rose with the music; he found that he could laugh and talk, and he began to feel less strange.

The dance over, he joined a group of unknown, and stood talking and listening.

Then he retired between his favourite pillar and watched Olive.

It was an easy task, for wherever she moved a small circle of respectful admirers followed her, and the Puritan was always by her side.

Gradually, but surely, the room grew more crowded; the melody and confusion, the laughter and high spirits increased.

The lights seemed more brilliant, the music gayer, and Reuben once more plunged into the group and whirled round in a waltz.

The heat being intense, the corridors and ante-rooms were filled after each dance, and Reuben easily managed to keep out of sight of the persons whom he was constantly observing.

They were generally together, and the bitterness of his heart increased each moment as he saw that Morgan Verner paid the closest attention to Olive,

and that Mr. Normanby was always hovering around them.

Wandering about, Reuben at one time found himself in a spacious chamber, which was cool and less brilliantly lighted.

A few persons sat at some tables playing at cards, while others lounged at a stand upon which wine was placed.

From this chamber were two or three recesses leading to a picture-gallery and a music-room.

Delicate curtains hung before open windows and balconies, and an air of rest and quiet pervaded the place.

Reuben took a seat near one of the windows, and drew the curtain aside.

The night stretched before him calm and beautiful; behind him was the music and bustle, the laughter and gaiety of the ball.

A servant stepped up and drew a small table near him with wine upon it.

Reuben did not notice it, and the man disappeared, having unconsciously made an ambush for Reuben, who sat motionless, lost in thought.

A voice near him made him start, it was Morgan Verner's.

Drawing the curtain aside, Reuben saw that Morgan and Mr. Normanby had entered the room.

They were standing a little apart from the group at the tables, and were talking earnestly.

"Phew!" breathed Morgan. "Hot isn't the word for it! I'm on fire! Ain't you?" and he slipped off his cravat, and wiped his forehead.

"No," said Normanby, rising his mask and showing his face, calm and masterful as usual, his eyes fixed on the restless, dissatisfied ones of his companion. "But I have not the same cause for irritation. Never get irritated, my dear Morgan, whatever happens!" and he laid his hand on Morgan's shoulder.

"Don't do that!" said Morgan, shifting irritably. "You feel like the fiend as well as look like it! 'Pon my word, Nor, I think you are a devil sometimes, and not a man."

"Hah! hah! Your good demon, my dear Morgan!" responded Mr. Normanby, softly.

"Good!" said Morgan. "Phew! how hot! Anxious, of course, I'm anxious. I wish something would happen. You said something might turn up to-night. Nothing has—"

"Not as yet," said Normanby, standing so that he could see the ball-room. "Be patient! Why, man, you ought to be happy; you've been near your heart's idol all the evening; she has smiled upon you."

(To be continued.)



[TIMELY HELP.]

TRUE WORTH.

CHAPTER III.

It is not necessary to the purpose of this tale to describe in detail the party which Mr. and Mrs. Arnold gave on the occasion of "warming their new house."

There was the usual quantity of silks, satins, laces and jewellery.

Every thing was publicly admired and commended as displaying the most admirable taste, while, if either could have heard the remarks made in private among some of the guests, at the profuse extravagance of every thing which surrounded them, they would not have retired at the close of the party quite so self-contented as they did.

About eleven o'clock, Mr. Hardman, who had been attending to some important business in the city, came around as he had promised, and according to his usual custom, he entered the rooms unannounced, and desirous of avoiding notice.

He was fairly dazzled with the glare and luxury which surrounded him.

Rich velvet carpets, large and costly mirrors, superb chandeliers, damask covered furniture, in fact every thing in the room corresponded to the character of the house and the neighbourhood, as it had been named by Robert—it was first class.

A frown contracted his brow, for his experience told him how much this must have cost, and he could not help feeling a pang of disappointment, as he saw how foolishly extravagant Arnold had been in his expenditures.

Mentally renewing the prediction which he had made when the subject of the purchase was first made, he gave another sigh over the folly of his young friend, and in a moment afterwards found himself seized on either hand by Robert and his wife, for they both warmly loved him, and as they had said, without his presence the party would have been dull indeed.

The evening passed over as all other evenings, devoted to similar senseless purposes, must.

One by one, or rather, in pairs, the delighted guests departed, and when the door closed upon the retreating forms of the last couple, Robert and Belle threw themselves each upon a sofa, and exclaimed in the same breath, "What a delightful evening!"

And now that the house had been purchased, fur-

nished, occupied and warmed, they must settle down to the ordinary routine of daily duties; and each performed their part well.

Robert was as prompt and as attentive at his business as ever, and prosperity continued to smile upon his efforts.

Indeed she fairly laughed outright, so that Robert's heart was gladdened, as he felt how little chance there was for the realization of Mr. Hardman's croaking predictions.

True, he found his expenses considerably—nay, largely increased. Every day or two his wife wanted money for the house, and occasionally for herself and the children, for living now in such a house and in such a neighbourhood, they must dress accordingly, and they did dress.

Robert made no objections, for he too had something of that pride which leads too many men to go beyond their depth for appearance's sake, and as their business was increasing beyond their expectations, he saw no reason why he should not live in the style of many whom he knew were not doing half the business he was.

July came around with its broiling sun and hot winds, and Belle and the children were almost stifled with the heat, and the air was so foul.

Indeed they ought to have a change of air. Besides, there was nobody in town. All their friends and acquaintances had gone to the country, and they ought to go too.

And of course they went. Mr. Arnold found a very beautiful boarding-place about an hour's ride from the city. He could come out every evening, and reach the city quite early enough in the morning, for at that season of the year business was not very brisk. The price for the whole of them was only eight pounds a week, but then they had two rooms which looked out upon the river—a fine lawn for the children to play on, and plenty of woods near at hand in which to ramble.

So the house was shut up, the cook and housemaid were discharged, and with the nurse they moved to their new quarters.

Much to his delight, Robert found two of his city friends among the boarders, and this made their residence much the more pleasant. It was arranged that when business allowed, they were to stay from the city for a week, and get up riding, sailing, and fishing parties, in which they were to have a grand time generally.

Only one thing more was wanted to complete their happiness, and their establishment.

Mr. Arnold's city friends each kept their horses and carriage, and it was so pleasant for them when they came up in the afternoon, to take their families riding in the cool of the day.

Mrs. Arnold had been indebted several times to each of her friends for pleasant rides, and began to think how pleasant it would be, if Robert only had his horse.

She wondered to herself how much a horse and carriage would cost, and if Robert would get one if she were to ask him. She could drive out with the children, and that would be so pleasant.

She did not, however, say anything to her husband, for her conscience told her that it was quite an unnecessary piece of expense, no matter how much it might add to her present pleasure.

One day Robert failed to come up in the usual train with his friends, and as she thought business had kept him, she accepted an invitation from one of the gentlemen to ride with himself and his wife.

They took the road which led to the city, and the afternoon being very lovely, they were having a charming time.

About five miles from where they were stopping, they saw a gentleman in a dog-cart, driving very leisurely towards them, and as they came within recognising distance, Belle fairly screamed with delight, for it was her husband. The meeting was hailed by every one with pleasure, and Belle saw through the whole at once.

Robert had wearied of being always under obligations to his friends, and had purchased a horse and dog-cart.

"Dear, good soul!" how she thanked him in her heart, and wouldn't she kiss him when she reached home.

Of course she gladly left her friend's carriage and seated herself beside her husband, who in a few words explained that he had indeed purchased the turnout that day.

"But," he continued, "of course I only want it while we are in the country. I shall sell as soon as we get home again, and I can easily get all I gave for it."

"What did it cost, Robert?" she said, looking admiringly at the beautiful turnout, for it was very neat and very elegant.

"The turnout cost me a hundred and thirty pounds, including harness and all the fixings. The horse, Belle, I call him Bob, is worth the money. Wait till he rests a day or two, and I will show you what he can do—only don't say a word about that."

"Of course not," said Belle, who was too happy

to think of saying or doing anything he did not like at that moment, and she feasted her eyes again on their turnout.

"Who would have thought, Robert, five years ago, when you were getting two hundred a year, that we should ever own our horse and keep a carriage?"

And she looked in his face with an expression of such perfect love and happiness, he did not wait for his kiss until he got home, but stole one on the spot, at which Belle was not at all displeased.

And Robert Arnold, who, five years before, was getting two hundred a year, and who was then very glad to get it, was actually the owner of a house, besides being the sole proprietor of a horse and dog-cart, and he thought he was very happy.

July passed off, as it does every year. Robert and his friends had their riding parties, sailing parties, and fishing parties, to say nothing of other parties to fill up the void.

It was one continued round of mis-called pleasure, excitement and extravagance, but, hurried on by circumstances which they could not, because they made no effort to, control, Robert and Belle went with the tide.

August came around. Business was at a dead stand still in the city. Robert had his time on his hands, and Belle begged him to stay up with her and the children. But the excitement and pastimes of July did not satisfy August, and one evening when the three families were seated on the back piazza, in the clear soft moonlight, the subject of a year of pleasure was broached.

The gentlemen jumped at the idea—the ladies were in ecstasies, and in half an hour after the matter had been first named, it was arranged that they were to start on the following Monday.

Isle of Wight first, then return to Brighton for a week. They would be absent not over two weeks in all, and they would undoubtedly have a delightful time.

The next morning the three ladies went with their husbands on a shopping excursion, for they must of course have travelling hats, and travelling port-manteaus, and travelling dresses, and a nice time they had of it, and a nice bill they ran up for their husbands to pay. But they were paid, and the ladies were perfectly happy.

They followed out the programme to the letter—Isle of Wight and Brighton, and returned to their home just before the close of August. As business would commence again early in September, the gentlemen made arrangements for returning to London by the tenth of that month, and the second week in September saw Mr. Arnold and his wife once more in their own home, after a very short season of gaiety and extravagance.

Robert did not find a purchaser for his horse and dogcart at a price to suit him, so he determined to keep it until it was too cold to ride, and every afternoon when he could, with any propriety, got away from business, he was to be seen "on the road."

True, it did not cost him but four pounds a month for his horsekeeping, and what was that when he was getting eighteen hundred or two thousand a year?

But then there were other expenses on and off the road, which swelled his monthly bills considerably, as he found out when he came to settle up.

This continued until business demanded all his attention, when, finding he had no time to ride without neglecting his business, he sold his turnout for about half of its cost, and with the proceeds paid one of the notes he had given for his carpets. So that was off his mind.

When cold weather set in, the party season came with it, and it was one incessant round of going and coming.

Of course this all cost money, but the business of the concern could afford it, and it went.

And so matters continued until the near approach of the new year, until which time let us leave this gay and happy family in the first season of their probation in their own house.

One incident, however, and it was a very trifling one, must be mentioned, as it concerns and connects the parties thus far brought to the reader's notice.

One Sunday, after their return from the country, Mr. Arnold and his wife were returning from church with the children, when they perceived Mr. Hardman just ahead of them, walking along very leisurely with his hands behind him, and they quickened their pace in order to catch up with him, but just as they were within speaking distance, he started forward, dropped his hands, and hurried on.

The meaning of this movement was apparent in another moment, for he stopped to shake hands very warmly with a lady and gentleman who were coming in the opposite direction, and whom he appeared to greet with great cordiality.

At the first glance they seemed to be strangers to Mr. Arnold, and he was wondering who it was that Mr. Hardman, generally so unimpassioned and cool, should greet with such evident cordiality.

A nearer approach sufficed to show that it was Mr. Benson and his wife, a pretty, modest-looking woman.

Mr. Benson looked the perfect man in his bright, handsome-fitting suit of black, and his wife was dressed neatly and tastefully, but without any attempt at display, while Mrs. Arnold was all flounces and laces, and feathers and ornament, and even the children were dressed more like a couple of show dolls.

As they approached, Mr. Benson bowed very cordially to Arnold, and extended his hand, which was taken with something like hesitation.

The introduction of the ladies took place, and after a few very commonplace remarks, they separated, Mr. Hardman joining Arnold and his wife.

"That Benson is a fine looking man," said Mr. Arnold.

"He is more than that," was the reply of Mr. Hardman, with more emphasis than usual called for by the remark.

"He will be a leading man yet in his business."

"What is his business?" asked Belle.

"A carpenter. You ought to know, Mrs. Arnold, as it was he who put your house in order."

"Oh!"—that was all she said, but it meant a whole volume.

After leaving Mr. Hardman, Mr. Benson was the subject of conversation between Robert and his wife, and the highly-dressed lady of the gentleman who owned his house and kept a horse was very slightly indignant that any introduction had taken place at all.

Five years ago, and she might not have thought so, but "Honourable mutterings," and the incident is only narrated, as slightly characterizing the changes wrought by one season of prosperity.

CHAPTER IV.

TOWARDS the close of the year, Mr. Hardman was waited on one day at his office by Mr. Benson, who, as he said, preferred not to trouble him at his house on business.

"Oh, never mind that. Come always and when you choose; I can talk of business anywhere. Well, how did you get on with that contract, Benson?"

"I made what I expected to, within a few pounds; but I have a much larger one on hand, on which I shall clear six or eight hundred pounds—that is, if the houses are closed in, so that I can work through the cold weather."

"Indeed, I am very glad to hear it. Do you require any assistance with that?"

"None at all, I thank you; I have come on a different matter. I have sold my house."

"Indeed; what was your motive in doing that? I thought you had a snug place there, and it was growing every day."

"True; but I found a customer, or rather he found me, who offered fifteen hundred pounds cash for it. The house, you know, was not much, but I thought it was full as much as the property would ever be worth, and I let him have it. It stood me in four hundred and twenty, and I have lived there four years."

"But what are you going to do with your family?"

"My family don't amount to much, you know. There is only Mary and the two young ones, and we have made up our minds to board for a few years. If business goes on and prospers as it has done, we can have another house as soon as we choose. Indeed, we might have it now; but I rather think it better to put this money out for the present. I have means for all my present business and there is no use in having it idle."

"And has your purchaser paid you?"

"Yes; here is a certified cheque for the whole sum. I would not let any stand on mortgage, as I thought I could do better with it."

"And what do you propose doing with it?"

"That's just what I called to see you about, if I am not troubling you too much."

"Go on," said Mr. Hardman, a gratified smile stealing across his fine, noble face.

"Well, I called to ask if you would not advise me as to the best manner of investing it. I am a good enough mechanic, and I find I can make some money, yes, and save it too; but I am too busy with my work to know much about money matters, except as far as my own business goes. Now, will you oblige Mary and me by putting this out in such a manner as you think best? Put it out just as you would for yourself. Will you do that much for me?"

"To be sure I will, if you are willing to trust to my judgment. But why don't you leave some of it on bond and mortgage?"

"Oh, there is too much trouble about titles, and I

may get into a lawsuit before I know it. No, put it where I can realize at any time, if I see fit;" and he handed Mr. Hardman the certified cheque.

Mr. Hardman wrote a receipt for the money, with a guarantee of five per cent. interest until invested, which Benson put in his pocket and took his leave, with a smile of intense satisfaction.

Mr. Hardman followed him with his eyes until the office door closed upon him, then scanning the cheque for an instant he put it in his bank-book for deposit, and resumed his writing.

On the evening of that day, or rather late in the afternoon, as Mr. Benson was passing homewards, he saw on the corner of Ann and William Streets, a woman picking over a barrel of coal ashes, and putting the few pieces of coal which the carelessness of some servant had left, in a small covered basket.

As he passed her, she raised her head, and he saw that she was perhaps thirty years of age. In that he could not be mistaken.

His attention was then more particularly attracted to her, and drawing forth a two-shilling piece, he approached her closer.

Her dress, though of the most common kind, was studiously clean, and her whole appearance was very far above the occupation in which she was found.

Seeing that she was observed, she drew her hood quickly down, not so quickly but that Mr. Benson could perceive a deep flush come to her face, and hastily stepping up, he said, at the same time tendering the coin he held in his hand:

"You don't look as if you ought to be doing that. Take this."

The tears gathered in her eyes as she received the coin; stealthily glancing around, to see if the movement was observed by any one, and drawing her hood still closer down, so as almost to hide her face entirely, she said:

"I thank you very kindly, sir," and made a movement as if to go on.

"Come, come, madam, poverty is no crime. Don't be ashamed of it. It is hard to bear, I know."

"You know! Heaven bless you then, you can feel for me, for I am poor enough, Heaven knows."

She said this so earnestly, raising her face to Mr. Benson's with such a look of deep sorrow and suffering, he felt his eyes grow moist; and as the woman, in raising her head to address him, afforded an opportunity of seeing her features, he observed that she was pale, and her face was pinched up, as if by want and suffering, though she had evidently been almost beautiful.

"Where do you live? Have you any family? How came you to be picking coal in the street? You must be badly off indeed. You have a home?"

"I am doing this to keep my children from freezing."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Benson, "children, and freezing! Where do you live? I will go home with you. Come, show me the way."

"As you say, sir, I feel that my poverty is no crime, and for my children's sake I will have no false pride. You shall go home, if you please, with me," and she uttered that word with such a melancholy expression, Mr. Benson was fairly startled.

They walked on in silence for a few moments, and at length he said:

"Have you a husband living? Oh, I beg your pardon; of course you have not, or you would not be suffering so."

"I have a husband—Heaven help him, for I am afraid man cannot—I fear he is gone past all hope."

"Why, is he sick?"

"Worse than sick, sir. But you can see for yourself, here we are;" and she stopped in front of a large four story tenement house in Cherry Street.

Mr. Benson looked at the house with something of surprise.

She descended into a back basement, followed by her wondering companion.

As he descended the steps, slippery with dirt, and entered the foul den, for it could be called nothing else, he wondered if it was possible for human beings to live in such a place.

It was so dark at first he could not distinguish anything, for the apartment was lighted only by one small window, and that uncovered with dirt, it almost excluded every ray of light.

Closing his eyes for a moment, in order to be better enabled to see, as he opened them he perceived a mass of something in the farther corner.

It was his companion kneeling on the floor, by the side of a pallet of straw, over which was spread a ragged counterpane, and on it were lying two children, the objects of the fond mother's care.

Save this, there was not one single article of furniture in the room—not the semblance of a chair or table; nothing but that straw and those rags—and this was home!

Mr. Benson was so overpowered, that for a few moments he could not speak; but having now recovered sight enough to distinguish objects in the dreary apartment, he gazed around in stupefied amazement. But save those rags and the kneeling mother, nothing met his eyes.

Turning to her, he was about to speak, when a motion among the rags, preceded by a faint cry of a child in distress, stopped him, and a feeble voice said—

"Oh, mother, is that you? I am so cold and hungry. Little Nelly is asleep. Yet, poorthing, she cried with the cold after you were gone for ever so long."

I am so hungry and so cold.

Mr. Benson could not stand this, for the thought of his darling at home, his petted, mollified Nelly—for he had a Nelly too—was too much for him; and leaning his head against the bare, damp wall, he gave way to tears which benumbed manhood.

"In the name of Heaven, madam," he said, when he found time to speak, "why are you here? Do you really live here?" and he gazed again around the cheerless, desolate apartment, with its sunken floor, the empty fire-place, everywhere the most abject poverty met his eye, and the conviction of the suffering endured by those who called it home, chilled him to the very heart.

At the sound of his voice, the child who had addressed its mother rose up from the rags which served the double purpose of bed and covering, and staring at him with a look half of terror, half of hope, threw her arms around her mother's neck, while scalding tears were rained upon her shrunken shoulders.

The mother arose, the child still clinging to her neck, and Mr. Benson saw that it was indeed the personification of poverty and suffering.

Its clothes, it indeed the rags which covered her could deserve that name, scarce sufficed to cover half its skinny body.

The lips were blue with cold, and her little-teeth chattered, as the cold, damp air struck to her unprotected person.

Her eyes, deep set in their bony sockets, glazed with the fierceness of hunger and suffering, and her little thin, pinched face, told a whole volume of hardships and privations.

"Here, I can't stand this," and he emptied his pockets of all the change he had; "buy some food, and something to keep these little ones from starving or freezing. Go quick. Poor things—poor things—Heaven help them! You say you have a husband?"

"Yes, Heaven help him, sir; but he is a miserable, debased drunkard. For many months he has been our ruin, but he is my husband," and she buried her face and her tears on the shoulder of the child who still clung to her, as if assured of comfort and protection in her mother's arms.

"What is he? Where is he? Who is he?" he asked anxiously.

"My name is Scott, sir; my husband is a carpenter by trade, and if he only would keep sober, he is a good workman."

"A carpenter—so am I. Where is he? I want to see him. The infamous scoundrel, to see his wife and children in this condition, when he can earn so good a living! Where is he, I say?" he asked, almost fiercely, for he was completely carried away by his feelings.

"I am sure I do not know. Sometimes we do not see him for a week at a time, and never when he is sober."

"Where can I find him?"

"Heaven only knows, sir. He lives everywhere but with us. Perhaps he is in some of these public-houses near by. Shall I go for him?"

No; go buy some food and fuel. I can't stay any longer now. I will call to-morrow morning as I go down town; but if he comes in, be sure to keep him. I will be certain to see you in the morning. Heaven bless you, good woman; you have served to give me a good lesson to-day, and I won't forget it soon. There, never mind any thanks," he said, seeing that the mother was about to pour out the gratitude which was overflowing her heart, "I don't want any; get something for yourself and the children, and be sure if he comes in to keep him. I will be here in the morning," and without waiting for any reply, he left the place.

As he was hurrying homewards, his thoughts divided between his Nelly at home and the Nelly he had just left; he jostled a gentleman whom he was passing and who, on his turning around, he recognized at once.

It was Mr. Arnold.

"Oh, Mr. Arnold, I am so glad to meet you," he said, shortening his pace to suit that of the gentleman addressed, and not very much to his satisfaction, for Mr. Arnold was dressed in the top of the fashion, while Benson had yet his working clothes on.

However, remembering that Benson was, in some degree, a protégé of Mr. Hardman, he forced himself into something like cordiality, and returned his salutation with apparent warmth.

"I am so glad to see you," he repeated. "You are just the man I want—I want some help," and as Mr. Arnold turned with a very broad stare at these words, Benson laughed outright. "Not for myself, I promise you—not for me," and he laughed again at the mistake. "I have just left a scene of poverty, desolation, and misery, such as I never witnessed. I declare I could not sleep to-night if I did not think I could do something for them; and without waiting for any questions he detailed briefly, and in his own blunt, straight-forward manner, the meeting with Mrs. Scott—the visit to her home, and what he saw there.

Mr. Arnold listened with apparent attention and interest, and when he had concluded, said in reply:

"Why, to tell the truth, Mr. Benson, business is very dull just now, and we are overrun at the house and office with these kind of things. There are so many impostors, you know."

"Oh, I will give my word there is too much truth here, Mr. Arnold," he said, warmly. "Such suffering I never saw before, and never want to witness again. Come, I must have something—I can't let you off entirely. Only go with me in the morning to see them."

"Oh no; I don't care for that; I will take your word for it. I will give something if you insist upon it, but upon my word I am afraid you have let your feelings run away with your judgment."

"Go and see for yourself," said Mr. Benson, with warm-hearted enthusiasm—"go and see for yourself, and you won't say that."

"No, your word is enough," and Mr. Arnold handed the manifest donation of a shilling.

Benson's first impulse was to tender it again to the donor, but decency forbade that, and he pocketed the coin, but made no more allusions to the poor suffering family; he could not to such a man, for he knew that he was a prosperous and prospering merchant, but he felt that he had very little heart, and from that hour he lost all respect for him.

They parted, and Benson hastened on to his home, anxious to unburden his breast to one who he knew would not only sympathize with, but gladly co-operate with him in relieving the terrible destitution he had just witnessed.

(To be continued.)

EXILED FROM HOME.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE festivities at Dunholm Castle were not prolonged until a late hour.

The music was perfect, the dancing in the moon-lit ruins romantic and delightful; supper was served before midnight, and by one o'clock the carriages were announced and the guests took their departure, charmed with their entertainment.

Lord Darkwood accompanied Miss Norreys to her carriage, in which Mrs. Kerridge, Miss Ensor and Col. Warburton were to return to Bechmont with her.

There was no opportunity for lower-like speeches, although the marquis felt like indulging in them.

Col. Warburton was waiting to follow his hostess into the vehicle, the remaining carriages were close behind, and Lord Darkwood contented himself with pressing the hand of the East India heiress, and whispering the word "to-morrow," as he assisted her into her place.

Col. Warburton followed, the door was closed, and the carriage rolled away.

The marquis stood, in evening dress, upon the castle steps until the carriages had all departed, then he entered the house.

"To-morrow!" he repeated to himself. "To-morrow! I shall see her then, and urge her to allow me to proclaim our engagement."

Ah, he little knew all that that morrow was fated to bring forth!

Pietro waited upon him, as usual, at his toilet, but he was too occupied in his own hopes and schemes to note that the Maltese was strangely self-absorbed.

"Pietro," he exclaimed, arousing himself from his abstraction, when his valet was about to depart, "I have something to tell you. You know that I have long been desirous of making a good marriage. I am about to realise my desires. I am in love with Miss Norreys, and I have asked her to be my wife. She has half consented. She agreed to consider my proposal and let me know her answer next week."

"You could not make a better match, signore,"

said the valet. "She has beauty, wealth and family. Bechmont will make a handsome addition to the Darkwood manor. The lady has a fortune in the Three-per-Cents besides, I have heard."

"I see you comprehend the value of my intended connection," said the marquis, emphatically. "I shall urge a speedy marriage. And, Pietro, you had better get that superfluous dirt out of the dungeon below," he added, in a lower tone. "Get the dungeons into presentable shape before my marriage, in case Miss Norreys, or any one else, should desire to explore them. Keep the keys until the task is done."

"I shall have to watch my opportunities, signore. Upon a night like this I can do nothing. I like the dark for such work, not moonlight."

"Then the first dark night that comes must be improved. Your reward shall be ample, Pietro. We will consider its amount when you bring back the keys with the statement that your work is completed."

He dismissed his servant by a gesture. Pietro went out with an odd gleam in his eyes, and a very curious expression upon his lank, swarthy visage.

"A clever dog!" muttered the marquis. "And perfectly devoted to me—and to my money. He knows that he's in clover. He'd do anything for money, the rascal! Now to dream of Sicily and to-morrow."

The next morning, at a late hour, Miss Norreys sat in her boudoir.

It was nearly noon and she had but just breakfasted.

She was attired in a morning costume of mingled milk and camel-hair material in cameo shades, and was about to take a walk in the park.

It was evident that she had not slept well during the previous night.

Her lovely olive face was paler even than usual, something of the carmine was missing from her lips, and there were bistre shadows under her velvety brown eyes.

She was about to rise when her Hindoo attendant entered.

"Missy," she exclaimed, "Aga is come."

A sudden flush of animation lighted up the lady's face.

"Send him to me," she commanded.

A moment later Aga was ushered into her presence.

He bowed low before her after the Eastern fashion, and awaited her questioning.

"Well?" said Miss Norreys, impatiently. "I can read success in your face, Aga. You went to Yorkshire—you found the house—you questioned the woman?"

"Yes, missy," replied the Hindoo, rapidly telling her in what manner he had entered the house at Lonsmoor and ingratiated himself in the favour of Mrs. Quillet. "And I got the address of Miss Granger, as you bade me."

"She is in China?"

"No, missy, in London, at No. 80, Northumberland Terrace, Queen Street, Notting Hill, replied the Hindoo, circumstantially, referring to the card of address which Mrs. Quillet had given him.

"In London?" repeated Miss Norreys. "Then I know that the girl went to her. My instinct did not deceive me. The name, Aga?"

"Miss Granger married a curate, the reverend Thomas Myner, missy."

Miss Norreys started violently.

"Myner!" she echoed.

Aga repeated the name.

Miss Norreys put her hand to her heart.

"Myner!" she said to herself. "Why, that is the name of the Lady Georgina's governess! That Miss Myner's face made a vivid impression upon me. I am strangely interested in her. Can it be—? Impossible!"

Yet the bare suspicion that the Miss Myner at Dunholm Castle might be in some way connected with the family of the Rev. Thomas Myner, caused her a great secret agitation.

"I must go to London by the very first train," she said. "No, I have guests—I cannot leave them. Whom can I send?"

She thought of Lord Chilton. He was Gwen's lover.

Why not send him? The mission would be safe in his hands.

He would be cautious, secret, and not easily baffled.

She heard Aga's story and dismissed him.

She was about to send a messenger for Lord Chilton, when a servant entered, bringing a note upon a salver.

The note was from the young viscount, begging a private audience.

"Nay," said Miss Norreys, "Lord Chilton waits in the hall below. Tell him that I will see him here."

Naya disappeared and almost immediately returned, ushering Lord Chilton into the boudoir. Then she again vanished.

Miss Norreys welcomed her visitor with unusual warmth, but she did not tell him that she had been about to send for him.

There was a change in his looks that struck her at the first glance.

The melancholy that had characterized him since her earliest acquaintance with him had disappeared.

A joyous light shone in his blue eyes. He looked younger, brighter, happier, than she had ever known him.

"What has happened?" she asked. "Have you received good news, Lord Chilton?"

"The best of news, Miss Norreys," he answered, emphatically. "I have made you the confidante of my sorrows; now sympathise with me in my joys!"

The lady's face grew suddenly white.

"You have heard of, or from Miss Winter?" she exclaimed.

Lord Chilton did not notice her agitation.

"Better than that, my dear friend!" he cried. "I have seen her!"

"You—have—seen—her?"

"Yes, I saw her last night at Dunholm Castle. She was in the garden. I was with her during the hour or two you missed me. I have found my little Gwen, Miss Norreys. You have seen her—you know her!"

"I!" said the heiress, speaking with a painful effort. "Is she a servant there? I never saw a Miss Winter—"

"No," said the young viscount, all gladness, his face fairly radiant. "You did not know her as Miss Winter—you knew her as the governess of the Lady Georgina. She is Miss Myner!"

Miss Norreys started back, gave a strange, gasping utterance, and fell to the floor in a swoon!

CHAPTER L

LORD CHILTON sprang forward, gathered up the limp figure of his unconscious hostess in his arms, and laid it upon the sofa.

Scarcely had this movement been accomplished and he had turned his eyes in quest of the bell-pull, when the door of the inner-room flew open, and the Hindoo woman rushed into the boudoir.

She had heard the fall of her mistress, and had instinctively comprehended its meaning.

She ran to the sofa, with a half-articulate cry upon her lips. Miss Norreys' head was thrown back upon the pillow, her olive face strangely pallid, her eyes closed.

Naya put her hand above the lady's heart. It seemed to have stopped beating.

"Go!" said the Hindoo woman, fiercely, without turning her head towards Lord Chilton. "She has had some great shock. You have killed her! Go! Leave her to me!"

The young viscount went without a word, but he went no farther than the hall without. Here, anxious and perplexed, he walked to and fro, waiting for the recovery of his hostess.

Her sudden illness seemed inexplicable.

He had been telling her about Gwen. He had just declared to her that he had found his betrothed in the person of Miss Myner, the young governess of the Lady Georgina Charteris. What was there in that statement to send his proud, self-contained hostess into a swoon like death?

"Nothing—nothing whatever!" he assured himself. "Miss Norreys is fatigued. The night before last was her own ball; yesterday we visited Dunholm Castle and danced till one o'clock this morning, and she is worn out. I have noticed for a day or two a singular nervousness and excitement about her. My statement about Gwen had nothing in it to affect her in any way."

Yet he was singularly uneasy, and continued to walk back and forth, a troubled expression replacing the recent gladness of his countenance.

The minutes passed, still Naya did not call him, and still no messenger was sent for a physician. He had waited nearly half an hour when the door of the boudoir opened, and Naya's black head, wound about with a gay Madras kerchief, was thrust out into the hall, and Naya's small black eyes searched in one swift, restless glance for the young gentleman. She saw him and beckoned to him with a nod of her turbaned head.

He approached her rapidly.

"You can come in, my lord," said the Hindoo woman, not over graciously, evidently regarding him as the cause of her mistress's illness. "But

you must be careful not to excite my lady again."

She opened the door, and the young viscount re-entered the boudoir.

Miss Norreys was seated in a lounging-chair. She looked as though a great storm of agitation had passed over her.

Its traces were visible in the ashen face, the white lips, the sombre, stormy eyes. She tried to smile when Lord Chilton entered, but the attempt was a pitiful failure.

He approached her, distressed and anxious.

"You look very ill, Miss Norreys," he exclaimed.

"Do you not wish a medical man to be sent for?"

"I am quite well," answered the lady. "I am not used to faint, my lord, but, in truth, I have been over-excited. Pray be seated."

He resumed his seat, his fair face full of concern for her.

"You were speaking of your discovery of Miss Winter," said Miss Norreys, quite oblivious of herself and her recent singular attack. "Tell me more about it. I am greatly interested in your love-affair, Lord Chilton, much more interested than you can possibly think."

"You are very kind," returned the young viscount, "but I cannot obtrude my personal affairs upon you in a time like this, Miss Norreys. Let me go away now, and return when you are quite recovered."

"No, tell me all now," said the lady, steadily, while the pained lines about her sweet mouth deepened. "I can bear it—I mean that I am impatient to hear your story, Lord Chilton."

"It may divert your mind from your own weakness," said the viscount, at a loss to account for her persistency upon any other ground. "Since you insist upon it, I will tell you the sequel to the little story I told you in the garden the other day. Then I mourned for my lost little Gwen. Now I rejoice because I have found her!"

"It is strange—very strange!" murmured Miss Norreys, shrinking back into the shadow. "You found Miss Winter at Dunholm Castle last night in the person of Miss Myner, the Lady Georgina's governess? That was what you said?"

"Yes," assented the viscount, wondering that she should remember every word of the statement he had made to her almost in the moment she had fainted.

"Miss Myner is Gwendoline Winter."

Miss Norreys put one small, tremulous hand over her eyes.

"She was in my house for days," she said, as to herself, "she was under my care, and I never knew nor suspected her identity!"

"No, how could you?" questioned the viscount, in surprise. "You never knew her as Miss Winter! And at the time she was here you had never even heard my story."

"I never knew—I never suspected!" said Miss Norreys, a low wail in her voice. "And yet there was something in the beautiful, frank face that touched my inmost soul! There was something in the fearless glance of her sweet eyes that made me love her as I have never loved any human being—save one! If I had only known!"

Lord Chilton was bewildered. Had Miss Norreys' sudden attack affected her brain?

"My dear friend," he said, gently, "you seem to reproach yourself. How could you have known or suspected that Miss Myner was another person of whom you had never heard? You never had heard of Miss Winter until I told you of her?"

"Never. I had never heard her name, nor suspected her existence."

There was still that strange faint wail in her voice that had before perplexed him.

"How does it happen that Miss Winter is living at Dunholm Castle—at Dunholm Castle, of all places in the world!—and under a false name?" asked Miss Norreys, after a brief silence.

"She was driven away from Lenemoor, where she had no right, by the two old family servants who have protected her all her life," replied Gwen's lover. "In her great strait, she turned to her only friend, the governess, who had been all the mother she had ever known. This governess, Miss Granger, had married a poor curate, who has established a boys' school at Notting Hill. These people, Mr. and Mrs. Myner, welcomed her with affection. I shall never forget their goodness to her," added Lord Chilton, in parenthesis. "Their school is unprofitable, Gwen tells me. Fortunately, I have a vacant living at my disposal, the incumbent, a very old man, having recently died. I shall present this living to Mr. Myner, Heaven bless him!"

"And these Myners adopted Gwen as their own?"

"Yes, after a fashion. They gave her their own name, the better to screen her from insult and from Orkney's pursuit. The friendless Miss Winter would never have obtained a situation as governess, but Miss Myner, the supposed relative of the Reverend Thomas Myner, who is of good family, had no difficulty in establishing herself in a good position. Lord Dardwood advertised for a governess, and she, thanks to her good friends, obtained the situation!"

"What fate ever brought her to Dunholm Castle?" said Miss Norreys to herself. "I cannot understand it!"

"There has been a Providence in our reunion," said Lord Chilton. "I had searched for her everywhere in vain, yet when I came to Beechmont on a visit, I found her. You know her, Miss Norreys. You know her beauty, her goodness, her sweetness. I cannot leave her longer at Dunholm Castle, as companion to that vulgar Lady Georgina. I am impatient to take Gwen under my own protection. I am anxious to push forward our marriage. I would procure a special license and urge Gwen to marry me this very day, but for the marriage-settlements."

"But she has no property."

"True. If she had a father to look after her interests I would probably be required to settle an annual income, a separate property, upon her. As she has no one to consider these things for her, I must do so. The custom is an excellent one, Miss Norreys, and I fully approve it. And it is my wish to consider Gwen's own best interests, as a father might have done for her. I shall write to my lawyer to-day and bid him prepare the settlements."

The lady's eyes flooded with tears.

"You have a chivalrous soul, Lord Chilton!" she exclaimed.

He coloured.

"I desire to remove Gwen from her present duties at once," he exclaimed. "She will return to the Myners, to remain until after our marriage."

"Let her come to me," cried Miss Norreys. "My house and my heart are open to her. Let her come to me!"

Lord Chilton thanked her warmly, replying:

"That is what I most wished—that you would take charge of Gwen until after our marriage. You are very kind, and I am very grateful."

"I will go with you to Dunholm Castle, and we will bring her away with us," said Miss Norreys. "Her place is here. She must not be left at the castle another night. Does Lord Darkwood suspect her true history?"

"Impossible! How could he suspect a secret that has been so carefully guarded?"

Miss Norreys' head drooped back upon the cushions of her chair, and Lord Chilton was struck with her haggard looks and the brooding trouble in her sombre eyes.

"Lord Chilton," she said, after a pause, "have you well considered this matter?—this entanglement of yours? You are noble, rich, with aristocratic connections. This girl you love is poor, friendless; she was educated by two poor servants out of charity or pity; she is ill-born; her mother sleeps in a dishonoured grave. She is no match for you. Reflect well before you commit an act which you are likely to regret throughout your whole after life."

"This from you!" said Lord Chilton, reproachfully—"from you, who have known Gwen!—in herself, she is noble, the peer of any lady in the land. No one looking in her face would ask her pedigree. She is an angel, Miss Norreys—"

"I believe it; but her birth? Her social rank? Any scullion in your kitchen might sneer at her origin!"

"She is of good blood—I know it. Any one looking at her must be convinced not only that gentle blood flows in her veins, but that she comes of an honourable race!" cried Lord Chilton. "Every instinct of her soul is noble. Such as she do not come from bad stock. And I mean to prove the truth of my belief! I mean to prove her of good blood, Miss Norreys, if it be possible to trace back the history of that poor wanderer who perished so miserably on the Lone Moor in Yorkshire seventeen years ago!"

A look of wild alarm shone on the lady's face.

"No—no! Let the dead rest!" she cried. "Believe me, Lord Chilton, it is better to let the mystery of this girl's parentage lie in its present obscurity. She is not a fitting wife for you! Find a more suitable bride, and leave this girl, Lord Chilton. I am older than you, and I know that nothing but

calamity and misery can spring from such alliance?"

"I refuse to believe it. I had not expected such wordly counsel from you, Miss Norreys."

The lady did not answer, but the viscount saw her wring her hands silently, in a dumb and terrible anguish that frightened him.

Then suddenly the forced outer calmness of the lady gave way, as a dam yields to the overpowering rush of the swollen, frenzied stream, and she cried out, in a passionate voice:

(To be Continued.)

MERELY AN EPISODE.

THEY were two very different creatures to begin with, and they were in very different moods at the present moment.

Cicely was in a good enough humour, and leaned back in the most comfortable chair in the room enjoying her marrows place to the utmost, and looking the very picture of beautiful content, though a trifle surprised withal.

Cicely always was in a good humour, satisfied with herself, her pretty face, her belongings, and only desirous of being let alone. She really could not see why Prue should be in such a rage.

But to Prue—poor, brown, honest, hot-tempered little Prue—the matter appeared differently. Her eyes sparkled indignantly, her cheeks were uncomfortably red, her small fists clenched themselves, and she walked to and fro.

"Cicely!" she exclaimed, "Cicely, you—you are a cold-hearted, selfish animal."

Cicely took another marrows glass, and sent her white teeth into it with a gently speculative air.

"You are a rude little thing," she said, sweetly. "And nothing but your youth makes your temper excusable. And, as to my being selfish, I am sure I don't see why. A person—"

"A person!" cried Prue. Yes, I dare say, and it is always the first person with you. You never stop to think of the second person or the third. I am out of all patience. You white, cold, even-tempered—"

Cicely took her turn at interruption here, smiling one of her cherubic smiles, and showing her loveliest cimple.

"To be sure I can't tell you that," she said.

"No," returned Prue, "to be sure you can't."

But she had not taken up cudgels on her own account, and seeing that she did not intend to, Cicely gave her a glance of inspection, and then spoke again.

"How is it you never quarrel for yourself," she put it to her. "You never do, and you are always squabbling for other people—Dick or somebody."

"Oh," answered Prue, shortly, "I can stand it. I don't care about myself."

Cicely gave her another quiet look.

"But you do care about Dick?" she suggested. Prue's reply was straightforward enough, though she winced slightly.

"I should be ashamed of myself if I didn't," she said. "Dick is worth loving, and always was. I was truer to him than you were when we were children, though he did love you best, and make himself your slave and bear everything from you."

Cicely indulged in another cherubic smile, and another marrows glass and sighed prettily.

"Poor Dick!" she condescended.

"Poor Dick!" Prue echoed. "Poor Dick indeed! It is all very well to look gentle and say 'Poor Dick.' But that is your way. And to think how he loves and craves you, and how happy you might make him. Oh, how happy I would make people if I were as pretty as you are."

Cicely craned her round, white throat to get a glimpse of the pier-glass, and then she shook her head.

"No you wouldn't," she answered, "You couldn't do it unless you were a Turk."

But Prue did not laugh at the perfect good faith with which this guileless observation was made. She only shrugged her shoulders fiercely.

"Fah!" she said, and took another quick turn across the room.

When she neared Cicely again she wheeled about and confronted her.

"When is Dick coming?" she asked.

"I don't know," was the answer. "How should I? He said he would leave Calcutta on the first, I think."

"You 'think'?" echoed Prue. "And the poor fellow thinks he is coming home to marry you. Cicely made a nervous little move.

"Oh, don't she said, looking half-frightened. "I don't like to—to bring it so near."

Prue advanced one step.

"Cicely," she said, solemnly, "you don't mean to tell me that you care for the other one?"

Cicely became desperate, but she certainly did not look like a young person who felt convicted of caring for "another one." She only appeared frightened and restless, and as if she was very anxious to be let alone.

"I wish you wouldn't be so uncomfortable!" she exclaimed. "I wish you would let Dick and Jack Ingoldsby take care of themselves. I am sure they are equal to the task. I think there never was a poor girl so worried as I am, between you all. You scolding, and Dick writing, and Jack raving. What am I to do? I cannot be rude to people, and if I am polite they will—well, you see how it is with Jack Ingoldsby. He will not let me alone, and he says I can save his soul or ruin it. And then there is Dick, writing that his future is in my hands! And if I save Jack's soul what am I to do with Dick's; and if I save Dick's what is to become of Jack Ingoldsby. And as to you, instead of helping me, you are worse than Jack and Dick put together. Why cannot you be comfortable?"

Prue regarded her with a cold sternness which was undoubtedly most trying. She entirely ignored her pleadings.

"It is a nice thing to hear you talking of 'Jack,'" she remarked, "I did not know you had got to that point."

"How can I help it?" faltered Cicely.

"You cannot help it," answered Prue, succinctly.

"You have not soul enough!"

"Well, then," said Cicely, "why don't you leave me alone?"

She was not at all amazed at the remark. It did not trouble her to hear that she had no soul. She never asked herself disagreeable questions about her own soul, or other people's.

But Prue's next speech did disturb her to some extent.

"I will leave you alone," she said, "and then, when Dick comes, and finds you entangled with this Ingoldsby man, you can manage the matter yourself. I think I shall like to see what you will make of it."

And she walked deliberately out of the room.

"Prue!"

Cicely called after her, but she would not come back.

Finding herself fairly deserted, Cicely made the best of the matter.

She was far from feeling at ease, but she settled herself more comfortably in her chair, and turned pensively to her bon-bons.

Certainly her prospects presented rather a trying aspect.

She could scarcely remember the time when she had not seemed to belong exclusively to Dick. She did not know how it had come about, but this was the exact state of affairs.

When they had been children together, he had been her slave and adorer; he had borne with her tyrannies and caprices; he had obeyed her behests; he had sacrificed himself to her continually.

He had been fond of Prue, who was several years her junior, and he had praised her honesty and courage; but it was Cicely he loved, and bowed down before.

"I ought to care most for Prue," he had said, when he was twelve years old, and he had said it usually, and with some indignation. "She gives up to me, and she likes me. But I don't care most for her. I care most for you; and it's a shame!"

"I am prettier than Prue," Cicely had said, calmly. "People always care most for me."

And so they did. And when she was older the case was the same.

The lovely girl grew into a guileless-looking young woman, with a delicious pair of wide, clear eyes, and a cherubic face, as innocent as a baby's. The soft hair fell in little wayward rings on a brow, low and white, like a child's.

The girl's dimples were simply bewilderingly pretty.

They showed themselves when she laughed, when she frowned, when she was surprised.

She looked like an exquisite, full-grown edition of one of Raphael's child-angels, but she was, in fact, an empty delusion and a soulless snare.

But Dick had not found this out. As Dick grew to manhood, his love grew also; and, somehow or other, Cicely found herself engaged to him.

He was handsome and clever, and he admired her so much, and was so ready to submit to her. So she let him persuade her to promise to marry him; and, on the strength of this promise, he went to Calcutta to make his fortune, because a fortune was necessary to Cicely's happiness.

He went to Calcutta, and worked early and late. He caught fever, and lay at death's door, on one or two occasions, but the thought of Cicely a fair face, and lazy little smile, kept life in him, and helped him to battle against pain, and hazard, and difficulty.

He spent his scant salary on absurd, extravagant presents, and sent them home to Cicely; and he

wrote long letters, which Cicely found it difficult to read even by instalments.

He lived on her love, and clung to it with a passion and faith piteous to see.

If Cicely's letters were a little empty, and rather rambled from the point, he only thought how innocent and simple she was, and dreamed of the time when she would be wiser in love's ways.

As for Cicely herself, she was quite comfortable. Dick's diffuseness tired her somewhat, but she managed to bear up under it by dint of perusing his frequent outpourings, a page at a time, and answering them in the same way.

She liked the presents, which were all rare, pretty things to wear; and when she tried the articles on for the first time, she often felt quite affectionately moved toward the donor.

Once, when she stood before the mirror, in an exquisite Indian muslin he had sent, she found herself so charming, that she raised her arm, and kissed the lace frill upon it.

"Why did you do that?" asked practical Prue, startled a little.

"Oh, I don't know exactly," was the answer. "It looks so nice, and I like it so."

"I thought it was for Dick," said Prue, coolly.

"For Dick!" laughed Cicely, opening her eyes.

But when next she wrote to Dick, finding herself at a loss for something to say, she recorded the incident very creditably. "I liked the dress so much that I kissed it. Prue said the kiss was for you, and perhaps it was." Which Dick believed most implicitly.

He might not have believed it so wholly if he had known everything.

She was too fond of admiration not to be generous with her smiles.

Men fell in love with her incontinently, and had their trouble for the pains, in the end.

It was not love Cicely wanted; it was universal adoration.

She did not care who gave it her—old men, or young or middle-aged men who ought to have known better.

It was the old story of the knight who "loved and rode away."

But it was Cicely who rode away. But though the name of her admirers was legion, she had never had one before who interested her as much as Jack Ingoldsby did.

She had heard horrible discreditable stories of Jack Ingoldsby all her girlhood; and she had also heard all sorts of amazing reports of his beauty, and wealth, and lavishness.

He had wasted two or three fortunes in riotous living; but that did not matter at all, because he had a few score more in the background.

His father had threatened to disinherit him again and again.

But who could resist the fascination of beautiful Jack Ingoldsby.

He had travelled all over the world, and dozens of beautiful creatures had died of broken hearts through his charms and his neglect.

So nearing all this, Cicely had innocently concluded, long before she met him, that he must be "nice."

The fact of the matter was, that Jack Ingoldsby was not nearly so bad as he was painted.

There was good enough in him to have retrieved him, if he had met with a good woman, with strength of character to make a struggle for him.

He was not one of the weak, whose amiability is their snare.

He was an unusually fine young fellow, who had been spoiled, and who had gone wrong.

He met with Cicely. He encountered her at an evening party, and was irrevocably bewitched.

If he had taken a fancy to the moon, he would have immediately taken steps to obtain possession of it.

So, taking a fancy to Cicely, he attacked the fortifications boldly.

She had nothing on earth but her clear eyes, and her dimples; but such objections were puerile.

He made love to Cicely; he followed her here and there; he called on her again and again; and each time he saw her he was more bewitched than ever. In the end, he threw himself at her feet, though this fact was discreetly kept secret from Prue.

He concealed nothing. Cicely could save him. He would begin a new life for her sake.

He really believed that the girl, was as angelic as she looked, and he trusted her as completely as Dick did.

He had heard nothing of Dick. Cicely was discreetly silent upon this point, also.

When Jack Ingoldsby knelt at her side, with real tears in his handsome eyes, and implored her to forget his past, and vowed that he would have been willing to sacrifice all he owned for the inward knowledge that his life had been a pure one, and

that he was worthy of her, she looked at him with a sweet, troubled smile on her infantile mouth, and faltered out, "Oh, please, don't! It frightens me! I know you will be good now. Please, don't!" And looked bewildering in her unsophisticated distress.

And but that Jack Ingoldby was a fiery lover, she might never have gone any further.

But the time came when his tempestuousness betrayed her into divers little indiscretions.

And so it was, that here was the end, now that Dick was coming home, having inconveniently made the fortune through a marvellous stroke of good luck; and she was in the rather trying position of being afraid to face him.

What would he say to Jack Ingoldby, and what would Jack Ingoldby say to him?

How could she explain matters satisfactorily, if they each chanced to learn the whole truth.

With Jack at a safe distance, she was quite equal to telling divers little lies to Dick; or, with Dick away, she could have done the same in case of difficulty with Jack.

It was just as well that Prue had left her to herself.

She had a little engagement, of which that sturdy young person would hardly have approved; and she must keep it, though, under existing circumstances, it was somewhat hazardous.

"He will be waiting," she said; and he is so impatient. How fond men can be of people, to be sure! And how fond he is of me, poor fellow!" with a self-satisfied smile.

Of course Jack Ingoldby was waiting. He stood in the golden autumn sun-glow, holding his horse's bridle on his arm, and watching, impatiently enough.

He was pale, and his knitted brows showed signs of restless anger.

"I had to run away," she said, seating herself on the trunk of a fallen tree, and shading her face with a white hand. "Prue was so cross."

"Prue!" exclaimed Ingoldby. "What business is it of Miss Prue's?"

Cicely shrugged her shoulders.

"Oh, you don't know her," she answered, with much simplicity. "She is such a cross-little thing when she pleases. And you know I am under everybody's thumb."

Jack Ingoldby regarded her just a shade discontented.

"Cicely," he broke forth at length, "is it because you are under Prue's thumb, that you will insist on keeping me in the background in this curious fashion. You are surely not afraid of a girl of seventeen—and I am beginning to feel more than half ashamed of myself. There are people enough who would say a gentleman should not stand in the position you have persuaded me to stand in. You have never said 'Yes' to me yet; but after all this you cannot mean to say 'no.' And though I am not exactly a man for a woman to be proud of, this is not fair to me; it is not, indeed, dear. And it is not fair to yourself, Cicely."

"Somebody has been saying something disagreeable to you," she suggested, plaintively.

"Yes," he answered, knitting his brow again. "Somebody has been saying something disagreeable to me, and I want to talk to you about it."

He took her hand, and bent forward, to look into her downcast face.

"Cicely!" he cried, passionately, "I love you with my whole soul, and I heard, an hour ago, that you were playing me false."

Thoroughly frightened as she was, Cicely had nerve enough not to start.

"Ah!" she murmured, "I knew it was something like that. Whenever anybody likes me, somebody else tells them I am playing them false."

"How many people have 'liked you' during your twenty-one years?" asked Jack, with a tinge of bitterness. "A great many people, I am afraid, Cicely."

"Yes," answered Cicely at once, pathetic, and injured. "A great many people, I am sorry to say. A great many."

The naivete of the speech almost disarmed him. How could he help adoring a creature like this? A creature with such a face, and such a voice, and such a soft, submissive air?

He kissed her hand with eager love, just as Dick had kissed it long ago.

"I will believe anything you tell me," he whispered. "It is not true, is it—it is not true that there is some one else who has a right to you?"

"I don't know who can have told you such a cruel thing," protested Cicely, with tears in her eyes.

"Never mind who told me," said Ingoldby, feverishly, "if it is not true."

"How—how could I be here, if it was?" she said.

And then, having gone this far, she was obliged to go farther, and was led from one indiscretion into another, until she was involved in a perfect labyrinth of small fibs, and damaging half-denials of poor Dick and his claims.

"I don't know how I shall get out of it," she said to herself, as she slipped homeward in the twilight.

"I suppose I shall get out of it, though. One always does, after a while; but it is dreadful."

But before the day closed the plot thickened. At dinner, a letter was handed to her, and when she opened it, with a faint cry:

"Oh, Prue," she said, helplessly, "Dick has reached London!"

"Has he?" returned Prue, coolly. "Well, of course, it is what one might expect, you know, if he sailed on the first, as he intimated."

"Yes," faltered Cicely, meekly.

She did not eat any more soup, though it was her favourite kind, and she was endowed with a good appetite at most times.

And yet, after all, she made herself as charming as possible, to meet Dick's eye the next day. She knew he would come, and made diverse graceful preparations accordingly.

"Do I look nice, Prue?" she asked, trying the pier-glass, as usual. "I should like to look nice when Dick comes."

"You always look nice," snapped Prue. "That is the trouble. And it isn't Dick you care about, it is yourself. You are as vain as a peacock."

When Dick came at last, her manner was simply perfect.

The tender-hearted, impossible fellow thought it was emotion that brought the delicate red to her cheeks, when he rushed into the room, and caught her to his breast.

"Oh, my Cicely! My Cicely!" he cried, when he could speak. "How beautiful you are! Ah, Prue, how beautiful she is! A thousand times more beautiful than ever! And to think she has been so sweetly true to a poor, rough fellow like me! How can I be grateful enough to her! What is such a life as mine worth, to be laid at her feet? Is it not worthy of the honour. Ah! this pays for all! This would pay for years of poverty and work."

Cicely settled down into her chair, comfortable again, holding Dick's fingers with a nice little clinging touch.

"Have you been working very hard, poor boy?" she asked. "And are you very rich, indeed? I hope you have not been working too hard?"

Dick threw himself on the stool at her feet, and sat adoring her, and listening hungrily to every sound of her soft, lazy voice.

Prue withdrew into the shade of a pair of window-curtains, and looked on with a lump in her throat, and hot, rebellious tears rising in her eyes.

He will find her out some day, and then—she murmured. "Oh, he does not deserve it. It is not fair!"

For the next few days Cicely found matters arranging themselves so smoothly, that she began to think Fate must mean to treat her kindly.

It was so pleasant to be admired from morning till night, and have somebody at her feet.

She began to be almost fond of Dick. His star was in the ascendant.

"Oh, Dick, I am so glad you came home," she cried, artlessly. "And how nice you were to think of me so. I must kiss you."

It was just such a caress as she had bestowed upon the lace frill, but Dick looked upon it as the most bewitching little outburst in the world.

But there came a day when this was changed—changed with terrible suddenness.

One afternoon he came to the house with a strange expression on his white face.

"Cicely," he said, "put on your hat, and come with me."

The colour faded out of the girl's cheek, and she stared at him submissively.

She had a vague idea that she was coming unexpectedly upon her hill of difficulty, but she was too great a coward to confront it boldly.

She obeyed him, because her shallow brain suggested nothing else.

He did not look like Dick at all. He had the air of a man who was terribly in earnest.

She saw that her day of reckoning had come; and it was to be ten times worse than she had fancied it could be.

"Dick," she cried, "how cruel you are! How can you be—"

But he stopped her, in a voice hopeless enough to have moved her very soul.

"I will never do it again," she protested. "I didn't mean to be wicked, Dick."

"No!" Dick groaned. "You did not mean it."

"I never thought Prue would have done such a thing," she began, petulantly. "It is all her fault!"

Dick turned toward her again, with a smile.

"Was it Prue's fault?" he asked her. "Are you sure it was not mine, Cicely? Or, better still, Ingoldby's?"

"If you knew all, you would not be so sure it

was not Jack Ingoldby's," she answered. "How am I to keep people from falling in love with me? You—you did it yourself!"

"I ought not to condemn you quite unheard," he said, wearily. "It is only fair to tell you all I have learned. You have trifled with me, and you have trifled with others; Jack Ingoldby more than all. For I ought to have known you. You met Ingoldby here in secret, when he wished to act in honour and candour. You told him that I had no claim upon you, and you let him believe that you were fond of him. You endangered your reputation when you were an honest man's promised wife. The thought of that fact had not a thread's power to hold you. Are these things truth, or lies?"

"I—I—He led me into it," she answered, after a pause, in a burst of wretchedness, and she hung her head, the tears slipping down her cheeks.

That was all Dick cared to hear, the last frail tie snapped at that moment.

He gave her a long look, and held out his hand. "Good-bye," he said.

Perhaps the old memories crowding upon him made his voice choked and unsteady.

After these hard years of danger, and faith, and love's labour—love's labour lost!

Far, far better, that he should have come home, and found the earth lying heavy on the fair, foolish face!

But Cicely fancied she detected relenting in his tone, and she acted upon the supposition.

She hung her head more dejectedly, and let her tears run faster; she sobbed soft, quivering, childish sobs, and did not say a word.

The next instant, however, she was undeceived, and a sharp shock it was to her.

Dick's hand fell, and he turned from her quietly. Her heart leaped into her throat.

He was going to leave her in terrible, stern earnest.

And then she remembered his loving kindness, his adoration, his readiness of self-sacrifice, his lavishness.

Who else would be so willing and tender a slave?

Who else would admire her so well? And then all the lovely things he had given her!

Just two or three steps Dick had taken, when he heard an emotional, little shuddering sob, and Cicely has sprung forward, and thrown her arms about his neck.

Her cheek touched his shoulder, her beautiful eyes appealed to him quite pathetically.

Pride might have controlled some woman, but not Cicely.

"Dick, she pleaded, "don't leave me, Dick, please. No one has ever been so—so faithful to me. And, Dick, if you go away, I know it will end in my marrying Jack Ingoldby."

Even as she clung to Dick, Jack Ingoldby himself came toward them.

"I thought I should find you here," he said, "and I am glad to be in time."

But there the power of his youth and passion conquered him, and his mocking changed to fierce earnest.

His nature was not such a one as Cicely's. There were heights and depths in it such as she could never have comprehended.

"You did your worst for me," he said hoarsely, "but now I know you—thank Heaven, I know you, too shallow and valueless a creature to go to perdition for!"

Then he bowed to Dick, with a touch of manly dignity, and turned on his heel, and left them.

"Oh, Cicely!" he said, to think how we have both loved you, and you could be true to neither of us!"

And he went away too.

To describe Cicely's humiliation would be difficult.

She flung herself down upon the turf, and shed the most heartfelt tears of her life.

She felt herself far more to be pitied than any one else.

Dick adored her no longer, and Ingoldby did not even admire her.

It was more than she could bear to face all at once.

Dick went back to Calcutta.

Cicely wondered if he would expect her to send back all his presents. She went upstairs and consulted her glass.

"It is the most disagreeable thing that ever happened to me in my life," she murmured. "But," and here she smiled the cherubic smile, "I am too—too pretty—not to be married some day."

F. H. B.

A FREEMASON'S Rink has been advertised. The meaning is obscure; the curiosity of the ladies will be aroused and their patronage certain.

AN IDLE SUMMER:

—OR—

CHARLES ARMOUR'S VACATION.

CHARLES ARMOUR sat over his desk in Bryant, Dallas & Co.'s counting-room.

He was not doing any thing, nor even pretending to.

It was one of the first bright days of spring; the windows were open; he caught glimpses of deeply blue sky through the openings between the house tops.

Spring had reached even this packed quarter of the city.

He recognised the ill savours with a little shiver of disgust, and wondered how people lived among them month after month.

Just across the narrow street, on a floor above his own, there was a woman of such superhuman ugliness that he could not keep his eyes off her.

She was leaning from her window, watching the proceedings in the crowded way below, and he fell to speculating as to whether, if she fell and was killed, the passers-by would pick her up, or whether they would wait for the police.

He thought about that till a fly, trailing himself along the window-ledge, attracted his attention.

The door behind him opened. He would not have noticed it but that a fresh gust of the acid smells from the packing-room struck his senses with a horrible feeling of nausea.

He had a fancy that some one spoke, but he could not rouse himself to answer.

He tried to find his fly again, but instead there was a small black blot which began whirling as he looked—whirling and spreading in circles of awful dizzying smoothness and swiftness.

He tried to escape from them, but was speechless and immovable.

And then his heavy head sank forward, and that was the last he knew for those three weeks.

He had it out with the circles and the fly and the haunting ugly face in those three weeks.

They nearly made an end of him in that time, but he woke out of a profound sleep at last, sane if not sound.

The dead weight of body in the bed which seemed to belong to him felt like lead against any impulse to stir.

But he did try to speak, and made a noise like a very young and very hoarse chicken.

Faint as it was, it brought a lady within the circle of his vision—a good, kind motherly face, that looked at him with rather anxious eyes.

"Mrs. Bryant?" he gasped, feebly.

"Doctor, he knows me," in a voice of suppressed excitement.

Whereupon the doctor appeared, touched his forehead and wrist, looked into his eyes, and announced that he would "do."

Armour raised the hand the doctor had just laid down, and surveyed it feebly.

"That belongs to me, does it? Where's the rest of it?"

"Be thankful for what you have left, young man. You have been shaking hands with grim death since you last knew yourself. Go to sleep."

"When is it?"

"Almost sundown. Third day of June. Mrs. Bryant, you will lose your train."

"I shall stay to-night, I think. Mr. Bryant is coming for the night, and we will let the nurse sleep."

So Armour dropped off to sleep again, and only dimly knew of the softly-lighted room wherein he lay, with quiet figures moving about it, till another day.

His splendid constitution made him rebound toward recovery with a rapidity that was wonderful.

Until his convalescent's appetite set in, he was perfectly happy with the delicious languor of returning life.

After that he was wolfish, and reviled with unseemly words the delicate dishes that as yet were all that was allowed him.

One day his landlady's little daughter, five years old, "fair and fat of flesh," came tolling up the staircase, and surveyed him from the door with the open-eyed wonder of childhood.

"Why, Mr. Armour? You look awful."

"Well, Polly, I feel awful. I'm so hungry, Polly. Your mother is trying to starve me."

"It must be a mistake," with her funny lisp over the old-fashioned speech. "If it wasn't such a very long stair, I would ask you some of my dinner."

"Well, Polly, since it is such a very long stair, I'll save you the trouble. You are small and round, and you look as if you might be tender. I think I

could eat you;" reaching out a gaunt arm toward her.

The small maiden stood her ground bravely, surveying him with solemn eyes.

"If you eat me, mother will not tell you what I just heard Miss Bertha Clive telling her for you."

Bertha Clive. Armour relapsed in his chair with not another word to say.

He was very weak yet, and the name was too much for him.

He lay silent, and Polly ventured a step nearer.

"Will you eat me?"

"No; you are quite safe. Has the lady gone?"

"She left a little letter. Mother sent it to you;" reaching with her finger-ends from tiptoe.

It was only a visiting card, with a word or two written with a hasty pencil—just a line of congratulation on his recovery.

"Are you hungry now? Shall I tell my mother?"

"I am very hungry," the tears rushing into his eyes. "And I am afraid your mother cannot help me much."

Anything that her mother could not help was beyond Polly's comprehension.

She walked away down the long stair, one careful step at a time, to state the case.

And Armour lay back against his pillows, and the tears that had gathered fell, and he did not even know it.

It was a chapter of the old, old story. For a year he had dreamed of her, sleeping and waking; planned opportunities for seeing her, which when they came were the very dust and ashes of unsatisfactoriness; and had managed to nurse into great fever a passion which had only the small beginnings of a passing fancy.

I suppose he had been exchanging twenty sentences with her in his life, except in the presence of others.

Bertha Clive was in her way a good deal of a favourite—as pretty, gentle, girl who have money and leisure to dress well, and keep good-tempered, are almost sure to be.

No one quite understands why—but that it doesn't matter.

The fact stands, and one of these soft-voiced, dove-eyed damsels will go through the world making and doing more mischief than a dozen women with ten times her brains.

Not that Bertha Clive was brainless, but it would have made no difference to Armour if she had been.

He didn't know anything about it any way. He was bewitched, as to speak, out of his senses.

The softest tone of her voice, the rustle of her dress, the very touch of this card that bore her name and the dozen words of her illegible graceful penmanship, unnerved and utterly disconcerted him.

So he laid there in his easy chair and cried those unconscious tears, while Miss Bertha went contentedly on in the sunshine, purring softly to herself over the consciousness of having done a good-natured thing.

He had not much space for his weeping. Mrs. Warner followed very shortly with her basket of fruit.

"Mrs. Dallas just called and left this. There was a young lady with her. Polly brought you the card, didn't she? And she said you were hungry, so I stopped to get your lunch."

Mrs. Bryant came a little later. Armour was only a bookkeeper in the firm of which her husband was senior partner.

He had no social position to recommend him, certainly no money, and yet somehow every body liked the young fellow.

Mrs. Bryant, in particular, had taken him in hand as if she had been his mother.

She announced to him now that a week later he was to be caught up bodily and carried off to the pleasant country house where the Bryants spent their summers.

"And you are not to go back to work, you understand, till the first of September."

"You are very good, but how can I take such a vacation as that? You must remember that I have already been away from my place a month."

"I do not see how you can help yourself, sir. Your place is filled till that time. Don't be ungrateful, Mr. Armour. Do give me the chance to exercise my pet hobby of nursing. We never have a day's sickness in the house from year's end to year's end. You will be a perfect blessing. And I shall keep you busy from morning till night with all sorts of errands, till you are strong enough to go to visit your own kin. Kate keeps the house full of young people, and I am to all intents and purposes childless through the summer."

So Mrs. Bryant talked on and on, partly to let the young man get his eyes dry and his voice steady again, and partly because she meant to make him accept, half as a favour to her, the invitation she had given.

For this genial lady had set her heart on the young man, as she might have done on a boy of her own.

So a week later Charles Armour, more a shadow than the stalwart young man of six weeks ago, looked passively on while Mrs. Bryant went over his wardrobe, and superintended the packing for his stay at her house.

There he was received as if he had been her apparent.

He rebelled somewhat against the belief that seemed still to prevail that he was in bondage to beef tea and custards, but after all he was still so weak that it was half pleasant to be nursed and coaxed and cared for.

Kate Bryant was undeniably a beauty—of the brunette sort.

A thoroughly wide-awake, cheery, happy girl, who, never having had a day's illness in her life, looked at Armour with eyes of awe, and seemed to fancy that he must be handled like a glass, or some more brittle material.

The day after his arrival, when he was half lying in a great easy-chair, thinking that perhaps this keen sense of bodily comfort was almost compensation for what he had suffered, Kate came into the room, and shut the door behind her with emphasis.

That was an undeniable defect in Kate's character.

She would slam doors. She did not see Armour till the deed was done; then she caught her breath with a gasp.

"Oh, dear! I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to."

"Miss Bryant, I am not such a fragile body."

"I don't know that. I can't help thinking that you are one of those perishable substances that crumble at a touch. How I should feel if you should dissolve before my eyes. I am a kind of all-earthquake, you know, Mr. Armour. I try very hard not to be, but I am afraid it is my nature to."

"I am very sorry to be the occasion of so much restraint in the house," with a sudden assumption of a sick man's pettish dignity.

Whereupon Kate's dark eyes softened, and she set herself to soothe him out of his annoyance, and succeeded so well that when Mrs. Bryant came in, an hour after, Kate was reading aloud from one of Howell's summer books, and Armour was fast asleep. After that there were no misunderstandings.

There were visitors in the house, over so many of them, Kate's friends, who kept a distant, happy stir of life, which was all that Armour knew of their presence. His rooms were in a remote corner of the building, and his hours were still ordered for him. He felt like a vegetable, but a very happy one, with plenty of sunshine and soft water. Kate came every day, sometimes half-a-dozen times a day—always deliciously pretty in her looks and ways.

He rebelled at last.

One morning when the breakfast-bell rang he walked into the breakfast room clothed like other people, and was introduced and congratulated, and took the law into his own hands to the extent of eating what he chose and as much as he pleased of it.

Mr. Bryant applauded and encouraged.

"My wife would have kept you on invalid rations for the rest of the summer. She owes you an everlasting debt of gratitude for the satisfaction you have already given her."

And after that Armour was a regularly recognised guest of the house, though a little closer in Mrs. Bryant's confidence than in any one else.

Visitors came and went.

The beautiful July days were gay with such hospitality as Armour had never known before.

It was a phase of life with which he was utterly unacquainted.

He said to Mrs. Bryant one day:

"I have no kin to visit. I am strong enough to go to them, if I had any. I ought to tell you I am an orphan, and this side of the Welsh Mountains nobody owns the faintest shadow of relationship. I belong to the 'people,' Mrs. Bryant; have always worked for my bread, and always shall."

Mrs. Bryant drew a long breath.

"There! that is off your mind, and you can go on enjoying yourself. I've seen it coming ever since you declared yourself well. Charles—my own boy—died; you have something of his look, something of his manner. Do as I want you to. It is only granting one more favour to a lonely woman;" and the tears ran down her face.

Armour bent his handsome head and kissed her.

"I have never had a home," he said, and thenceforth these two understood each other.

If Mrs. Bryant thought of Kate and a nearer relationship still, perhaps she is not so much to be blamed.

Kate's good common sense was pretty good assurance against any act of matrimonial folly, but she was so gay and thoughtless that her mother trembled sometimes for her future.



[A VISIT OF CONDOLENCE.]

Money did not matter, and, safely married to this man, Mrs. Bryant thought she could live out the rest of her years in peace and quiet.

So Armour gave himself up to enjoyment of his holiday.

It was all such a novelty to him.

He was rather a modest young man, and was somewhat surprised when he found himself made much of by the young ladies in the house.

And he had forgotten Bertha Olive? Not at all.

One night Fanny Murray spoke of her casually:

"That is one of Bertha's songs—Bertha Olive."

Armour was talking with someone else, but for the rest of the evening he gave so much attention to Miss Murray that she fancied she had made an impression.

And then, just in the last half hour that they spent together, he managed to say what was in his mind:

"Miss Olive is a friend of yours?"

"Bertha? Oh, yes. You know her?"

"Not well. I have met her a very few times."

"Then you will not be interested in knowing that Bertha has gone and engaged herself to Halstead Carey. Of course I'm a chatterbox to tell you, but I am so vexed with Bert that I do tell everybody."

After that Mr. Armour was not very interesting, and the next morning he had a headache, which made him stupider still.

That hearts are caught in the rebound is quite as true of men as of women.

Truer, perhaps, since men seem to possess a greater facility of transfer in that direction.

After he had sulked in gloomy despondency until Mrs. Bryant began to look anxious, he suddenly assumed a new role, and was as gay as he had been depressed.

Kate was bewitching. There was no denying that.

He had the advantage of constant residence, and

that other advantage of the interest of a recent illness.

Kate's dark eyes, when they were not mocking him, sometimes even when they were, betrayed a consideration for him that she showed for few others.

At least Armour saw or fancied it there, and acknowledged to himself that Kate was certainly very sweet.

And, half because he thought she liked it, and half because his restlessness impelled him, he let himself drift into an attitude toward her which meant much more to outsiders than he had any thought of its meaning.

There was a family picnic one day. Armour was carrying a heavy basket up the steep bank from the stream.

He had somewhat over-calculated his strength—not yet fully restored—and near the top lost his footing.

He knew there was a clatter in the descending basket, and he knew that he was following it in its downward course, and then that was the end.

The next thing was to open his eyes on a sickly-hued world, with water streaming in his face, and a frightened face or two within his range of vision.

"There, you're all right," a voice said, as he tried to rise. "You've frightened us half to death."

"I wish I was sure of the all right," settling back with a groan he could not help. "I believe that arm is broken."

"Oh, Charley!"

It was Kate's voice, with such a thrill of commiseration in it that he turned with a smile that was meant to be reassuring, and was only ghastly. I believe those two words settled the case in his own mind.

And the arm was not broken after all, only sprained at the shoulder, and, though Armour went about with his hand in a sling, it did not interfere materially with his comfort.

There was an interval of quiet in the house—a

space between departures and arrivals—and one afternoon, just in the glories of sundown, Kate sat, beside him on a low seat.

She had been reading aloud some of her favourite rhymed fire and sweetness, and the great eyes were soft and far away.

A little air of pensiveness subdued her usual brightness.

She was a beautiful girl, and while Armour looked at her a realization of the fact impressed itself on him. And she had been so good to him!

"Kate, dear," dropping his arm about her as she sat, "you've been so good, and you're such a dear girl."

She looked up at him an instant, and then hid her face against the arm of his chair.

And that was the tableau which greeted the eyes of the lady who suddenly and noiselessly appeared at the door.

And the lady was Bertha Olive. Armour saw the colour rise in her fair face, and then she turned away as noiselessly as she had come.

"Kate," in a very different tone from his last, "there is someone in the hall. A lady has just passed the door."

And presently there were greetings in Kate's effusive fashion and in Miss Olive's more quiet way, and then he was left to his own reflections.

They met in the evening. Bertha had come unexpectedly—a sudden impulse to see her old friend moving her to appear unannounced.

She was just a little distant to Armour—sweet and cordial, but with a little chill in the friendliness.

And though he had no ground for complaint, he resented it, and was more impressive in his attentions to Kate.

A day or two after her arrival Kate was talking:

"And what has become of Halstead Carey?"

"Gone to—don't laugh—Guinea—literally. He went off with his brother-in-law after adventures of elephants' teeth, or whatever it is they get there."

"I beg your pardon, Bertha—don't be vexed—Fanny Murray told me you were engaged to him."

"What utter nonsense! Fanny Murray is a gossip."

"Then it isn't true?"

"Of course not. How could I marry a man who might start for the moon on an hour's notice, and expect me to go with him?"

"Or for elephants' teeth. I am so glad to get you back again. It seemed as if you were really gone—while I believed it."

And then Armour knew that Miss Olive was going through one of Kate's frantic embraces.

Every word of the talk came to him as he sat in the little parlour back of the room where the girls were making believe sew.

Either they had forgotten he was there, or else they did not care that he had overheard.

He went away in a nice state of mind.

It had been Halstead Carey who had apparently stood highest in favour during all the time he had known her.

And rumours to the effect that Miss Olive had accepted him had reached Armour before his illness.

So that Fanny Murray's story had only been confirmation of what his faint heart had accepted as truth.

And how could he ever put himself in the attitude of suitor, even, now that the coast was clear, with the remembrance of what she had seen haunting him.

If Kate cared for him—and how did he know that she did not?—what right had he to withdraw from the position in which he had put himself?

I can't think that Armour enjoyed his vacation thoroughly.

There was a part of every day, an hour or two in the morning—after Mrs. Bryant had finished that "stepping around" which Mr. Hale assures us is an essential part of housekeeping—which Armour always spent with her.

For the last few days he had grown so quiet that Mrs. Bryant felt herself growing uneasy about him.

For my part, considering his relations to the different members of the family, I am not surprised "You are growing moped with our quiet ways. Do you really wish to leave us?"

"Dear Mrs. Bryant, your quiet ways are the gayest I ever knew in my life. And I have nowhere to go, unless I go back to my boarding-house. But indeed I ought to be at work."

"There is no work for you, as you very well understand. Do rest easy for another month. We shall all miss you so much. You belong to us—to me, at least—for I shall always believe that I helped Dr. Graves pull you through that illness."

Kate came in just there.

"Don't go," she said, looking him in the eyes with an appeal in her own. Kate's eyes were lovely,

and she used them with the greatest skill—with such perfect art, in fact, that nobody ever knew which was acting and which reality. Perhaps she did not always know herself.

That settled it, of course. How could he, considering what he owed them for their kindness and confidence, recede from an attitude of that sort which he had deliberately taken.

Does Charles Armour prove himself a coxcomb because he thinks Kate Bryant in love with him?

Then there is a vast number of young men who share his folly.

I suppose he reasoned that if she was not, she ought to be.

That very day he went into the garden, and stretching himself in his lazy fashion on an arbour-bench, fell fast asleep, and woke up suddenly to realize that Bertha Clive was standing beside him, having evidently just discovered him.

"What a pity to spoil such a charming picture. You can't have the slightest idea of how interesting you were," she said, talking grave nonsense.

It threw Armour off his balance. He had not seen much of young ladies, it is true, and it had never entered into his head that this particular goddess ever uttered a word that was not charged with majesty, or at least with sweetness, of wisdom such as befitted her royal state.

"I am sorry to have it spoiled even by Miss Clive. The reality is not as sweet as the shadow. I was dreaming of you, and you are kinder in dreams than in waking life."

Was not that a speech for a shy young man? And he was horribly frightened as soon as he had made it.

Miss Clive looked confused, and he guilty, to have and they stood facing each other, both very much more off their balance than circumstances could possibly warrant.

Miss Clive ought to have been able to meet the speech with the coolness that her society experience would seem to have made natural. And his presence of mind should have opened a way out for him.

If there had been nothing but ordinary relations between them, I dare say neither would have failed.

As it was, the "conscience that makes cowards of us all," or something akin to it, seized them and transformed them into blushing, awkward persons, neither of them capable of a word.

Armour spoke first:

"Miss Clive, I love you. I've been in love with you since the first time I saw you—a year and a half ago. I don't know that I ever meant to tell you, but I have done it, and you must forgive me if you can."

I think that if one pronounced Charles Armour a genius at blundering, there would be no just cause for contradicting the judgment.

He had put himself into a false position with Kate, and now to better matters he had stated his case to Miss Clive in such terms that one much cooler than she would have been puzzled to decide what he wanted her to say in reply.

And then Mrs. Bryant came up, and said:

"Oh, Mr. Armour, Kate wants you." And to Bertha, "Did you think I was never coming, dear?"

That night came Charles Grierson. Now Grierson and Armour had been fast friends for two or three years.

Grierson's arrival seemed somewhat unexpected.

Kate greeted him, but with something of constraint. And something ailed the man himself.

Armour met him with all his old cordiality, but something was wrong with the other.

There was a chill and restraint that surprised and vexed Armour, wholly unconscious of the cause of offence.

Kate had set her heart on a masquerade party. The house was full of people, and all the somewhat scattered neighbourhood was to join them.

As to Armour, he wished the affair well over. He had determined, on one excuse or another, to leave the house immediately after.

In the bustle and stir of preparation he had seen very little of either Kate or Miss Clive.

He had improved a few minutes' interview to re-monstrate with Kate for her treatment of Grierson.

"He's your father's clerk—as I am—but he's a gentleman, notwithstanding. You ought to be civil."

She did not remind him that he was over-stepping somewhat the liberty that belonged even to his position in the house.

She said, very humbly:

"Am I not civil to him?"

"I do not mean just that—only he is your father's guest, and in some way there seems a difference. You don't treat him as you do the others."

"I'm sorry you are not pleased. Has Mr. Grierson complained?"

"Of course not."

"Is this a matter to make fun of? You accuse me of incivility to visitors in the house, and I am trying to find out where my sin lies."

The door opened, and Grierson came in. He glanced sharply at Kate's face, downcast and flushed, and then glowered at Armour.

And then Kate escaped, and Grierson walked off without a word; and Armour was left wondering what in the world was the matter with everybody.

The evening of the party came at last. That afternoon, in Mrs. Bryant's sitting-room, Armour had beheld a confusion of light blue and silver drapery thrown about on the chairs.

"Kate's dress. I ought not to have told you, I suppose. It is too absurd with her complexion. But she would have it."

"Then, by law of contrarieties, Miss Clive ought to wear Kate's colours."

"She does. Cherry and black. Don't tell that I have betrayed them."

The house filled up in due time. Armour came in from a long, solitary walk, and caught a glimpse of a cherry-and-black apparition flitting down the corridor and disappearing in Miss Clive's room.

That was just as the first arrivals made their appearance.

He hastened to dress, and went down into the brilliant rooms.

All manner of fantastic figures filled them. A band from London was supplying inspiration for the dancers.

Charles Armour was not a sentimental young man, but music, even ball-room music, acted on his sensibilities as Champagne did on his brain.

In that walk he had been taking he had been coming to a determination, or trying to.

He loved Bertha Clive, and he believed himself committed to Kate.

But if Kate did not care for him—and to-night should settle whether or not she did—he should know his fate from Bertha.

It was not just a pleasant thing to think of doing, but he had nerved himself to it.

"It is one of those confounded scrapes which never settle themselves. I shall have to make a desperate move of some kind," he had said to himself; and so determined, he came down to mingle with the other masquers.

Two were talking.

"Bertha Clive is here, they say. Have you any idea which?"

"Not the slightest. Is that true about Halstead Carey?"

"Her dismissing him? Of course. Halstead Carey was a poor man. Do try if we can find her?"

A poor man! So was he, Charles Armour. He had not thought of that.

That was a new element in the calculation. Well, he could be silent.

Revelation whirled him over to just the reverse of his determination of two hours ago.

He would get away from the house, and never see Bertha Clive, if he could help it.

And then the music began, and while he listened his nerves got the better of him.

He was sitting quite silent, watching the dancers and promenaders, looking vainly for the scarlet-and-black which Miss Clive was to wear.

The dress came in sight at last, passed him, the wearer leaning on the arm of a tall cavalier, who betrayed himself as Grierson by a peculiarity of carriage which Armour recognised at once.

The step and air were not quite Miss Clive's, but the dress was hers, and on the band from which she had just withdrawn her glove flashed Miss Clive's peculiar ring of opals and diamonds.

A very little later Armour was with her. They had danced together, and the waltz music was still sounding.

He drew her away into a balcony, where just then there happened to be nobody. He removed his mask before he spoke.

"I know what you will think. Time nor place suit what I am going to say. But it doesn't matter so much how or when a man gets his death-blow, if it has to come. I had determined once-to-night that you should not hear what I am going to say, and I have brought you here expressly to break that resolution. I love you."

Then he stood and waited. The brilliant figure beside him stood, too—utterly motionless so long, that he turned at last with surprise at the silence.

"I suppose I have offended beyond words," he said, humbly enough.

The lady raised her hand—that hand which wore the ring—and uncovered her face. He had been talking to Kate Bryant.

Then somebody came, before he had a chance to speak.

Kate said just two words as she left him, drawn away perforce with the gay troupe:

"Oh, Mr. Armour!"

He stood there in a mental chaos that was horrible.

Nothing was of any kind of use any more. He could not recall what he had said—at least not the words of the saying.

Whether or not Kate understood he could not even guess.

He was in such a state of confusion that the tone of her exclamation conveyed nothing to his mind.

Whether, being cooler, he would have understood better, I do not know.

He could not regain his balance sufficiently to wish anything, though it did seem to him that a universal deluge might afford a shadow of relief.

At all events he could turn a key between himself and the rest of mankind until breakfast-time.

"I shall be charming company for myself," he said, aloud, going into the house.

Mr. Bryant met him at the head of the staircase.

He had on his business face, and looked fretted.

"Armour, I was looking for you. I dislike to ask you just now, but you seem to be the only man who can help me out. There is trouble with those Atwoods, and some one must go at once. I can't go—I am just as imperatively needed here—and if I wait to get word to Mr. Warren, it will be too late."

"I can catch the midnight train; there's three-quarters of an hour, and you can give me instructions while I get ready."

It was like a reprieve to a man going to be hung—or rather like being lifted out of a nightmare.

Anything to get away from the scene of such a blunder, and a legitimate, honourable reason for going, like this, was after the nature of a blessing.

His spirits almost rose while he dressed.

"You will make my excuses to the ladies. I will go out quietly without seeing any of them. There's hardly time for much explanation."

And so Armour was whirled away to the station, and with every rod put behind him he breathed more freely.

But protract his business as he might, there was no excuse for more than a week's absence.

Even a week comes to an end some time, and this rushed by as though time had a spite against him.

I do not mean that he devoted seven days to a consideration of his dilemma.

He had an enviable faculty of absorbing himself in his work of the minute, and he did not let himself brood much over what had passed or what was coming while he had an excuse for business.

But on the journey home there was no such excuse, and it was with a kind of desperation that he walked up the steps.

Mr. Bryant was at home, and had left word that he should catch the last train and come out, if by chance he came that night.

So it was quite dusk when he reached the station. There was no one waiting him, and he walked to the house.

He hesitated a minute before he opened the gate to the grounds.

Bertha Clive's sweet face floated before him, but in his heart the complication of affairs had wrought a revulsion of disgust with himself and the world at large.

"I wish I had never seen either of them." Then he went on, as I have said, with a feeling of desperation, and entered the house.

It was very quiet, but in a room of which he opened the door, hoping to find some living being, a mass of white drapery on a couch revealed Kate's existence in person.

"Charley, is it you?" starting up.

And Armour could only answer "Yes," in a voice which he did not himself recognise.

"Father said he thought you would not come to-night, and so I did not send to the station," settling back again in her half-reclining position. "You are to understand that I am thoroughly and entirely out of temper, and that you are to be exceedingly careful not to make me any worse."

So they were to fall into just their old bearing toward each other.

By an effort that seemed to him afterward more like a convulsion than anything else, he walked toward her.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

Her face turned away against the cushions. She did not look up as he stood beside her.

"There has been a scene. Father is trying to play the cruel parent, and mother is aiding and abetting him. That miserable Charley Armour is coming back here, and I have got to explain."

Who did she think he was? Armour stood dumb with amazement.

Then the spirit of mischief entered into him. After all, they would be no more than quits.

He knelt beside her, and took her hand. He did not venture to speak aloud; his voice might betray that it was not the "Charley" she had expected.

"Dear Kate," he whispered, "tell me."

She was too full of her troubles not to tell.

"Mother says I have treated Armour badly. She says I have misled him, by making him believe that I—that I cared for him."

"But—didn't you—just a little?" he said, softly.

"Not more than was good for him. The conceited simpleton thought I was in love with him. He came here just after that dreadful illness, and everybody liked him so much, and I tried to be kind to him; and, after the manner of men, he thought I had fallen in love with him. And so I was obliged to help him a little. You see he needed it. And he behaved like an idiot, of course, and now nothing will suit mother but that I must tell him all about you."

"My dear Kate, the present statement is all that is necessary," he said, rising to his feet. "I think the conceited idiot will comprehend without plainer English."

Miss Bryant sat up and gave a faint little sneeze.

Armour went out, feeling that he had had the best of the affair, and not yet beginning to repent.

He saw Mr. Bryant, explained matters, and announced a necessity for immediate return to the city.

It was business of his own, he said, and they ceased to urge his stay, seeing that he was determined.

To Mrs. Bryant he said:

"Kate and I have explained. Don't say another word to her."

"And you don't care? They were engaged on that visit which he made just before you left."

"He—Mr.—"

"Didn't she tell you, Mr. Grierson? I thought she had treated you badly."

"There was a great misunderstanding. I don't mind telling you: I am very much in love with some one else, and I am going to find her to-morrow."

He did not mean to see Kate again, but he did. Perhaps she had been waiting for him.

She met him in the hall as he was leaving the house.

Her cheeks were very red and her eyes very bright, but she did not seem out of temper.

"Mother says you are going away. Well, sir, our accounts are balanced—are they not?"

"Perfectly balanced. Or perhaps I ought to acknowledge some indebtedness on my side."

"You heard some truths good for you, at all events. So you thought I was not civil to Mr. Grierson?"

"Oh, wise young judge!"

"We'll cry quits, if you are willing. Now, goodbye. Wish me good luck."

"I do. Only—don't make love in the dark."

So he went back to the city with a single purpose—to find Bertha Olive, and hear his fate from her lips.

There should be no more room for blunders.

He started for her home at the earliest calling hour next morning.

He was too nervous to wait for events to give an opportunity.

He would make one for himself. On the way a friend stopped him for greeting and chat.

Armour was not patient at the interruption, but at least he showed no signs of disturbance.

As they talked the idle life of the city flowed past them.

Armour's back was toward the pavement.

"Look," his friend said. "There goes a man who has made an idiot of himself, for the sake of that pink-and-white image with him."

Armour turned, not distinguishing what the man meant. Bertha Olive was passing.

"Halstead Carey, and that is Miss Olive with him. You must have heard her spoken of if you have been at the Bryants. He left her once, and started off on an expedition to the ends of the earth; left the vessel at the first port she stopped at, and came back as fast as steam would bring him. And Miss Olive accepted him, and there's going to be a wedding immediately; and they are going to Van Dieman's Land, or some other equally convenient locality, to live."

"Isn't it very sudden?" Armour gasped.

"Within three days."

"And it is true?" catching at the last straw.

"Carey told me this morning."

And so Armour's summer ended. He went back to his work next week, and nobody ever knew what broken dreams haunted him.

He will not be inconsolable, I think. What man ever lived devoted to a shadow?

What man, at least, good for anything else? And Bertha Olive had been divine so purely through attributes of his own giving.

She never guessed—when she thought of that visit to Kate Bryant and Armour's connection with it, half-wondering what might have been if he had spoken in time, as she had fancied he meant to—that in his thoughts she would never sink to the level of common womanhood.

K. R.

FAÇETIE.

A GENTLEMAN entered a bachelor's room, and looking around, said: "Very snug—rather too snug—but I suppose if I had had a better half, I might have had better quarters."

THE word d-e-b-i is composed of the initials of "dan everybody twice!" "C-r-e-d-i-t is formed of the initial letters of "call regularly every day; I'll trust!"

It is very well for little children to be lambs, but a very bad thing for them to grow up sheep.

Two things that go off in a hurry—an arrow dismissed by a bean, and a bean dismissed by a belle.

THERE is one thing about a hen that looks like wisdom—they don't cackle much till they have laid their eggs. Some folks are always bragging and cackling what they are going to do before-hand.

STUPIDITY.

A GENTLEMAN who was trying to teach his dog some kind of a trick lost all patience with the canine on account of his seeming stupidity.

Giving up the lesson and looking at the animal as he stood by, intelligently wagging his tail, he said in a tone of vexation:

"Confound that dog! I don't know what to make of him."

"I will tell you," said a friend who was present.

"Well, what?" said the owner of the animal, a ray of hope lighting up his face.

"Sausages!" was the quiet answer. And still the owner of the dog was not satisfied.

KIND.

"How would you feel, my dear, if you were to meet a wolf?" asked an old lady of her little grandchild, with whom she was walking along a lonely country road.

"Oh, grandma, I should be so frightened!" was the reply.

"But I should stand in front of you and protect you," said the old lady.

"Would you, grandma?" cried the child, clapping her hands with delight. "That would be nice!"

While the wolf was eating you I should have time to run far away!"

THE manager of a provincial theatre was, many years ago, much annoyed by complaints concerning the aggravating height of feminine hats in his audiences. He made no boastful observations; he gave no stern orders; not he. He merely printed in large letters on his play-bills this masterpiece of genius: "The manager begs that all good-looking ladies will remove their hats for the accommodation of the rest of the audience. The aged, the bald, the plain, are not expected to comply with this request."

From that auspicious night the scaring bonnet and the mountainous hat were invisible at that wise man's theatre.

OBEDIENT ORDERS.

A CERTAIN general, supposing his favourite horse dead, ordered a soldier to go and skin him.

"What! is Silvertail dead?" asked Pat.

"What's that to you?" replied the officer. "Do as I bid you, and ask no questions."

Pat went about his business, and in a hour or two he returned.

"Well, Pat, where have you been all this time?" asked the general.

"Skinning your horse, your honour."

"Does it take nearly two hours to perform such an operation?"

"No, your honour; but then you see it took about half an hour to catch him!"

"Catch him! was he alive?"

"Yes, yer honour, and I could not skin him alive, you know!"

"Skin him alive! did you kill him?"

"To be sure I did, yer honour! and sure you know I must obey orders without asking any questions!"

A CLASS of trousered sentimentalists think that a tired husband should be met at the door by a wife with pleasant smiles, dressed with exquisite taste, swinging a nice nosegay in the balmy air, which she presents to him before placing his warm soft slippers on his delicate feet with the manner of a queen.

It is said that a Chinese gentleman thinks it beneath his dignity to manufacture his own witticisms. He appreciates wit and he is fond of tea, but he would as soon grow his own tea as make his own jokes. When he goes into society he carries in his pocket a package of prepared witticisms and repartees, which he has purchased at the nearest joke shop. When conversation flags, and he perceives an opportunity for saying something brilliant, he draws a humorous remark from the top of his package and

gravely hands it to his neighbour. The latter, as gravely reads it, and selecting from his bundle of repartees, the one which is appropriate, returns it, with a bow, to the original joker. The two then solemnly smile in a courteous and undemonstrative way, and resume their conversation, feeling that they have acquitted themselves with conspicuous brilliancy.

SIN, permit me to confess to you, I have your permission, I am sure, very well. "I don't know why it is or how it is, but one woman steals over the senses like a bower of honeysuckles, twined with graceful tendrils and odorous blossoms; she is unharmoniously perfect throughout as a faultless vine or flowing diademe; there is no touch of colour or fold of drapery lacking; one would as soon think of adorning a rose bush with elephants' ears as to imagine any evolution of more fitness in the perfect symmetry of form and colour. Another with estimable qualities of mind and heart, looks like a Dutch farm-pard with hollyhocks and sunflowers nailed on with a hammer, on the side of her head, the flat of her back, or where there is vacant space. Sin, I cannot be expected to know why this is onewise, while that is otherwise. What do you say, sir?"

A YOUNG Kentucky barrister lately made his maiden speech in defence of a man charged with stealing. "Gentlemen of the jury," he wound up, "my client is no more guilty of stealing than a fog that ain't got no tail. I thank you for your attention."

MEN, says Adam Smith, are naturally unselfish. A man will scoop the inside out of an egg without thinking that the mother of that egg is perhaps a hundred miles away, in the rain.

AFTER a trial about the warranty of balloons, which immediately followed a trial about some hats (both trials occupying two days), Mr. Serjeant Stene proposed to take a case relating to the quality of turnip seed on the following day, instead of immediately going on with it. Mr. Justice Willes replied, "Certainly not, brother Stene. I have kept the jury for two days on lamb and beef, and I am not going to bring them here for another day to keep them on turnips!"

If all the alphabet were invited to dinner, why could they not all accept the invitation? Because six of them come after T.

IT'S A POOR HEART THAT NEVER RIDGES. JONES has been sending in jokes to a comic paper for the last ten years, and discovers one of them published at last.

A CONSOLE. It is interesting to know that a chemist has obtained ferrocyanide of tetramethyl ammonium by saturating ferrocyanic acid with tetramethyl ammonium hydrate. This is a wicked world, but this reconciles one to putting up with things.

CURIOUS FACT.—It is not generally known that a great deal of material with which female loveliness adorns its head, is made in an heir-loom.

STRANGER, BUT TRUE.—In these days, when everything is done at railway speed, a great many people are met with who, you find, are, as they say, "tied to time." And yet, in spite of all these obstacles, how time flies!

A DAUGHTER OF ERIN.

THE NEW COOK (on receiving "short" notice to leave, with a hint that she has given a false character):

"An' is it me false character ye're after casting in me teeth! As if I'd be bringing me three character wid me, to lose it in your dirty service!"

ERIN'S CHINA.

FIRST FOOTMAN: "Uncorinable dull season, Mr. Charles!"

SECOND DUTY: "Hawful! But now 'Wales' is back, I do 'ope Things 'll look up a little!"

NEARLY A PREACHER.

AN official of one of the railroads was recently beset by an old man for a railroad pass to London. The stranger entered the office with a big cane in his hand.

He had no sooner stood his cane up in the corner than he briskly inquired:

"Are you the free pass man?"

The official hesitated a little, and the stranger amended his query by asking:

"Would you give a preacher a pass to London?"

"Are you a preacher?"

"Kinder."

"You give me your word that you are a preacher, do you?"

"N—ot exactly," stammered the stranger. "I don't say I'm regularly ordained."

"We can give passes to clergymen occasionally, but we must know that they are active dispensers of the Gospel."

THE END OF THE MATTER.

Pa
cach
have
1875-
away
tribut
were
5,000
The
siders
50,000
yield
sump
old r
size,
vast
main
Tri
Comm
Parli
year
The
pulso
distri
or co
charg
merg
appor
of alt
confir
firmed
1,334

"That hits me," cheerily replied the old man, rubbing his hands. "I calculate I dispense more gospel than any other one man in Antrim county."

"But you just admitted that you weren't a preacher," said the official.

"Not a regular, I agree. I'm what you might call an assistant to regular preachers. I'm sexton of a church, I can lead at a prayer-meeting, and I've started all the hymns that have been sung for five years past."

The official smiled faintly, and the stranger was encouraged to go on:

"I'm nearly a preacher. Folks send for me when they are dying, I keep order at camp-meetings, and if anybody's to be dragged out of the school-house for snapping beans during prayer-meeting, I'm the one who does the dragging."

"That's hardly being a regular preacher," replied the official.

"No, of course not; but it's mighty close to it."

FOR THE LADIES.—The clause of the Serbian marriage law requiring officers on contracting matrimony to furnish a guarantee of their possessing sufficient means of subsistence has been abolished by the Skupschina—a sensible proceeding. How can men guarantee their ability to support life when they are taking the very thing to make it insupportable—a wife?—Fun.

FINANCIAL RINKING.—"Now, my dear, all you've got to do is to be sure and preserve a good balance!"—Fun.

"A nursery must be a great place for dancing." "Why so?" "Because it is." "I don't see how." "Ain't a nursery a regular ball-room?"

A POPULAR writer, speaking of the ocean telegraph, wonders whether the news transmitted through the salt water will be fresh.

"Ma, dear," said an intelligent pot, "what do they play the organ so loud for when 'church' is over? Is it to wake us up?"

SOMEHOW we suspect that the nature whose lamps are always manned for a good cry keeps its feelings pretty near the surface, and that you need not go very deep to the left breast before you come to rock.

ONE day last week a gentleman living in New Zealand had made up his mind to get married, and a minister happening to pass through the town in which he resided, he asked him to await the arrival of the bride. Unfortunately, the young lady was on the opposite side of the river, some ten miles away, and the intended benedict went to fetch her. After he had crossed the bridge, the flooring was washed away, and the beams were some eighteen inches under water. The blank dismay on the bridegroom's face when he returned with the bride may be imagined. However, he was not to be beaten, and having procured a line, and tied the young lady on his back à la Blondin, he essayed to cross the perilous beam, and succeeded in gaining the opposite bank, and landed with his precious charge in safety.

STATISTICS.

FRENCH OYSTERS.—A communication from Arcachon says: "For a long time so many oysters have not been taken here as during the season of 1875-76, which ended on the 30th of April. We sent away about 90,000,000, of which 62,000,000 were distributed in the beds of the Gironde; 20,000,000 more were sold to the Belgian and English parkers, and 5,000,000 to the ostraculturists of the north of France. The catch hitherto has also been sent out in considerable quantities, and may be estimated at 50,000,000. Unfortunately, in consequence of the yield in 1873, a large portion was delivered to consumption in conditions far from favourable to the old reputation of Arcachon, both as to price and size. We may add that, notwithstanding such a vast quantity has been taken, an ample supply remains to secure the service for next season."

TITHES COMMUNION.—The report of the Tithe Commissioners for last year has been printed in a Parliamentary paper, showing to the close of the year 7,070 agreements received, and 6,778 confirmed. The Commissioners made 5,650 draughts of compulsory awards, and confirmed 5,452. In 11,230 districts the tithes have been confirmed agreements or confirmed awards. In 416 districts the rent-charges have been disposed of by redemption or merger. The Commissioners had received 11,788 apportionments, and confirmed 11,784. The number of altered apportionments was 4,932, and 4,322 were confirmed, of which 139 were received and 140 confirmed during the year 1875. They had received 1,334 applications for the exchange of glebe lands,

and confirmed 1,208 of such exchanges; 13 of the applications were received and 15 exchanges were made during the year. There were 2,300 applications for the redemption of rent-charges, and 1,843 of such redemptions were completed; 215 were received and 172 completed during the year. They had received 12 applications to convert variable corn rents into rent-charges, and completed 7. At the close of the year the Commissioners had confirmed 15,118 distinct mergers of tithes or rent-charges.

The aggregate number of students who have matriculated in universities in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, as students of medicine, amounted in the last term to 2,801. Of these 1,100 were studying in Austria, 1,371 in Germany, and 430 in Switzerland. The number of medical students in the same term at the Russian university of Dorpat amounted to 353.

WOULD YOU BE WILLING?

Would you be willing to cross the blue ocean,

And buffet the waves of a great angry sea,
To music on the relics of fancy's devotion
That lived in the ages before you could be!

Would you be willing to toil with the scholar,
Through long weary years to manhood's best prime,
And lie down at last unblest by a dollar
Of recompense given to pay for the time?

Would you be willing to delve in the mountains,
To live like the wolves in the woods far from home,
With the dimest of prospects that gold has
its fountains,
In age to repay for the wanderer's roam?

Would you be willing to struggle in sorrow,
Ye toilers of earth who rest not till death,
If you knew the fair fruits of your gain
would to-morrow
Be swept from your grasp like a thought
or a breath?

Would you be willing to covet bright honour
And wear it a while to lay it away,
All soiled by the vulgar, or tarnished by
slander,
To sink from the high to the low in a
day?

Would you be willing to sport on a river,
To sail on the waves—he gulped in its
breast,
To live just a little and ever and ever
Be left like the brute in silence to rest?

Or would you, by faith in that land bright
and holy,
Each day of the year in some humble way,
Stretch a hand to the fallen or lift up the
lowly,
And know that the father approves it each
day.

When love lies so near us, and blessings so
common,
The world o'erflowing with gladness
around,
Why seek such delusions while something
more human
And nearer at hand may ever be found?

H. H.

GEMS.

We cannot remember a night so dark as to have hindered the approach of coming day, nor a storm so furious or dreadful as to prevent a return of warm sunshine and cloudless sky.

Good temper is like a sunny day—it sheds a brightness over everything; it is the sweetener of toil, and the smother of disquietude.

Riches, without meanness and thankfulness, do not make any man happy; but riches with them remove many fears and cares. Therefore our advice is, that you endeavour to be honestly rich or contentedly poor; but be sure that your riches be justly got, or you spoil all. For it is said: "He that loses his conscience has nothing left that is worth keeping."

ANONIMOUS does soon with a wise and good man. Too much prosperity make men fools. Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other. Wealth

is not his who gets, but his who enjoys it. Employ your time well, if you mean to gain leisure. A man may have a thousand acquaintances, and not one friend among them. It is better to live on a little than to outlive a great deal. By others' faults wise men correct their own. We should take a prudent care for the future, but as to enjoy the present.

THROW life into a method, that every hour may bring its employment and every employment have its hour.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

GINGER SNAPS.—Are another kind that is excellent to keep. A friend told us she never meant to be without them, and kept them six months by moving into the cellar when they became dry, and if they grew too moist there, would dry them a little in the oven. Boil two cups of molasses, and when slightly cooled add one cup of lard, pork fat or butter, one large tea-spoonful of soda, and some ginger; mix hard as possible, roll thin and cut in rounds. For immediate use they are good enough if one-half a cup of water is added to the mixture.

TART CRUSTS.—Are excellent for this purpose, and they look nice on the table and are relished by most people better than cake. By the following rule they will remain good many months in a place dry enough to prevent their moulding. I think a cellar would be too damp, though I never tried it, having always kept them in a stone jar set in a cool cupboard; unless to be kept a great while it is needless to make them so rich. With one pint of flour use one-half pint of lard, a pinch of salt, and the beaten white of one egg, adding a little water, if any liquid is needed; roll thin and cut in rounds, wetting the edge of each before putting on the rim, which is made from a strip of dough cut one-third or one-half inch wide, set up edgewise and neatly fitted on. Another very pretty way of making them is to take two round pieces of dough, cut three or five holes in one of them with a thimble, and lay it on the other so they will hold together firmly when baked; when wanted for the table fill each tiny hole with jelly. This is an easier method than the first, but not as good, if one wishes to fill them to carry to a lover or supper away from home, as they cannot be placed one upon another when filled, like those having high rims around them.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE NIGHTINGALE.—The nightingale has been seen and heard in the woods at Virtuous Lady, June 1, 1876. This is the first season, I believe, they have visited these woods; no doubt the situation being sheltered from severe winds, is the reason why they have visited Devonshire this summer.

THE FOURTH OF JUNE AT ETON.—An account of the Eton Commemoration will, no doubt, be welcomed by old Etonians. Owing to the 4th of June falling on a Sunday this year, and the day following being a Bank holiday, the celebration of the "Fourth" did not take place until Tuesday, 6th. The day's programme commenced with absence at 11.30, followed by the usual speeches in Upper School; the oratory was, on the whole, quite up to the standard of former years.

WILD HORSES IN AUSTRALIA.—In some of the northern districts of Victoria, troops of wild horses greatly infest some of the runs. The produce of some escaped animals, they have multiplied to such an extent as to become a serious nuisance, and all attempts to capture them have been in vain. They not only consume the best pasture, but entice the horses of the squatter to pastures of their wild freedom. At the approach of a mounted horseman they are off like the wind, and nothing but a South American corral, and the Quacko, with his lasso, would suffice to bring them into captivity. The only alternative has been resorted to—viz., shooting them with the rifle, and this has been practised to some extent on many of the runs, and their numbers, in particular localities, greatly diminished; but more systematic action is needed before they are exterminated.

DEJECTION OF SPIRITS.—In sensitive minds, dejection of spirits is the great barrier of their advancement and progress in life. It is the fatal enemy to all efficient exertion—taking off the chariot wheels of all the mental and physical power, so that nothing is done with pleasure and hope. Men have been at times so overwhelmed in despondency, that the daily duties of life were performed in a spirit of heaviness and despair.

CONTENTS.

Page	Page
BASIL RIVINGTON'S	MISCELLANEOUS
ROMANCE	193
ROMES	194
THE DRAMA	194
VINCENT LUTTRELL;	
OR, FRIENDSHIP	
BETRAYED	197
SCIENCE	200
THE SCIENCE OF	
HEALTH	200
KEEPING UP APPEAR-	
ANCES	200
THE HOUSE THAT JOHN	
DANA BUILT	201
REVEREND; OR, ONLY A	
GIFT	202
TRUE WORTH	205
EXILED FROM HOME	207
AN IDLE SUMMER	211
PACIFIC	214
HOUSEHOLD TALK	215

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

COWSLIP.—In order to obtain a divorce you must file a citation and cause the same to be duly advertised before she can proceed in court. This can only be done through a solicitor.

J. C.—We do not advise a total abstinence from smoking, a moderate use of tobacco is soothing to both mind and body.

OLIVE SKYMOOR.—Declined with thanks.
ONE IN TROUBLE.—We strongly advise you not to attempt to destroy what appears to be natural to you; a proper and discreet order of toilet application is the best remedy and one that does not interfere with the work of nature.

R. J.—Your poetry is not up to our standard, and therefore thankfully declined.

QUIRY.—The master does not annul the indenture by allowing his apprentice to work for any other person, it is simply doing his bidding, which every apprentice is bound to do.

MABEL.—Walking out with a young man for a few weeks, and then dismissing him to carry on in the same way with another, and doing that sort of thing over and over again, is not the way ever to get a husband worth having, nor indeed a husband of any sort. And what must those many young men with whom you have so carried on, think and say of you? You must have made yourself pretty notorious by this time.

C.—In Europe the tendency is to raise the standard of age at which marriages may be legally contracted. In Russia, marriage cannot be legally contracted until the males are eighteen and the females sixteen; and in Denmark until the males are twenty and the females eighteen. Spanish youth may marry at fourteen and twelve, and it is the same in Greece and Hungary. In Italy it is eighteen and fifteen.

VERDANT writes to us to know how he can tell if a girl whom he loves dearly, and who has accepted considerable attention from him, really cares for him enough to marry him. Our advice is that you immediately ask her, and you will probably find out what she thinks.
J. K.—We cannot tell you the exact origin of the popular notion that overturning the salt at the table is unlucky. We remember, however, that, in the famous picture by Leonardo da Vinci, of the Last Supper, the painter represents Judas Iscariot as upsetting the salt, and there may possibly be some connection between that fact and the superstition.

J. H.—How can you be passionately in love with a girl, when you say you do not think her good enough to become your wife? It is poor love that is weighed in the scales of a huckster. True love looks right through poverty, and sees virtue smiling like an angel, although clad in a cotton gown and a coarse straw bonnet. We think you had better let the girl alone, and so save your conscience, and, what you think a good deal more about, your respectability.

FLORA.—Upon acknowledging the receipt of a present from a gentleman, the "Oh, thank you" is more eloquent than a profusion of expressions of gratitude. To a lover, the "Oh, thank you" should be fervent—warm; but to an acquaintance or friend, the enunciation should be milder, more emphasis being laid on the word "thank," so as to soften the exclamation. Among young people the manner of looking and speaking are eloquent exponents of sentiment; so that the knowledge of giving them the form of expression intended to be conveyed, is essential to the quality of intercourse between the sexes. Men are apt to misinterpret looks—women never commit that mistake.

SAMUEL RATS.—We should not advise a young man to marry a woman who had deceived him. In the majority of instances, such unions are unhappy and ill-assorted ones.

CHARLES CRAVEN.—When a love engagement has been broken off, all letters and presents on either side should be returned. It is dishonourable to retain even a single scrap of writing. Besides, not returning letters would probably lead the other party to suppose that it was considered that the engagement was only interrupted—not broken off—and might be renewed whenever a proper advance was made.

A ROSE.—Never either caress or contend with your wife in the presence of strangers; the one is folly, and the other madness.

THOMASINA.—Gaping or yawning is a deep and slow inspiration, with a simultaneous action of the respiratory muscles of the face, which are under the influence of the

digestive nerve. It occurs after fatigue and at the commencement of fever, but may be easily excited in persons of a debilitated nervous system by sympathy. All means which would give tone to the nervous system are remedial for gaping.

T. B.—The word "cosack" is derived from "kosa," the Polish for goat, and was applied to the tribe so called, on account of their wandering propensities and activity.

THE CHAIR.—Marriage observances differ in outward form with nations, and perhaps our own whimsicality is the honeymoon, which intermediate period is not openly celebrated by the Russians, who entirely abjure this sentimental custom. Their weddings generally take place towards evening. During the ceremony the bride and bridegroom hold a lighted taper in their hands in front of a small altar placed in the centre of the church. Rings are placed on their fingers, and their hands being joined, they are led three times round the altar. Two highly-ornamented gilt crowns are placed on their heads, and held over them by the groomsmen during part of the services. They drink wine out of a cup three times, and kissing one another, the ceremony is finished. The marriage couple then make a tour of the church, crossing themselves, and saluting each saintly icon on the way. Immediately after the ceremony, dinner commences at the house of the bride's father. At a marriage feast lighted candles are placed in every position and corner possible. No other wise but champagne should be drunk, and the quantity consumed of this beverage is remarkable. The dinner is followed by a ball, and the feasting is usually kept up for twenty-four hours. The married couple spend the first few days of their wedded life with the bride's father. After the marriage the bride and bridegroom must call upon every one of their relations, friends and acquaintances, and after this ceremony is finished, they settle down into ordinary life.

UNTO THE END.

Still relentless, my friend, are you?
Alas, with grief I own it true,
That I am as heartless quite;
Think you such folly is just right!

Life is hard and so brief, my friend,
All enmity should quickly end—
Pride in its cruel bitterness
Will surely seek wanton redress.

On this quarrel of yours and mine
How softly career the sun can shine;
But ere we both can quite forget,
Chill and darkly our sun may set.

To forgive, you know, is divine;
Oh, make that best privilege thine!
For full upon the grass, the sweet rose,
Brightly above the low grave grows.

M. H. A.

THE POWER OF LITTLE DROPS.

A little raindrop falling in the sea,
Exclaimed, "Alas! this is the end of me;
Oh, luckless fate, Oh, thoughtless drifting
shower
Why thus bereave me of my feeble power?
A little particle you scarce can see,
Why am I smothered in immensity?
For, where the ocean spreads from shore to
shore,
What is the virtue of one small drop more?"
But when the drop far downward deeply fell,
Fate gathered it within an open shell.
Where, waiting, in the curious-twisted whorl,
It formed at length a most transcendent pearl,
The wonder of the world, the kindest gem
That ever decked a monarch's diadem.

J. J.

ALICE and EDNA. Two friends, would like to correspond with two young men, with a view to matrimony. Alice is eighteen, fair, of a loving disposition, and thoroughly domesticated. Edna is twenty-four, fair, of a loving disposition, and thoroughly domesticated; respondents must be good tempered, loving, and fond of home.

ALFRED J. twenty, bombardier in the Royal Artillery, tall, curly hair, ruddy complexion, a Protestant, would like to correspond with a good looking young woman of a loving disposition, with a view to matrimony.

ROSA. twenty-seven, fair complexion, medium height, chief mate of a ship, well connected, would like to correspond with a tall young lady.

JANE and ISABELLA. two friends, wish to correspond with two young gentlemen. Jane is seventeen, tall, dark, considered good looking, Isabella is eighteen, fair, good looking, of a loving disposition.

LIZZIE and FLORENCE. two companions, wish to correspond with two respectable young men, with a view to matrimony. Lizzie is of medium height, fair, considered good looking and amiable; respondent must be dark, good looking, and fond of home. Florence is considered good looking, thoroughly domesticated; respondent must be fair, of a loving disposition, and fond of pleasure.

W. M. H. nineteen, medium height, brown hair, dark brown eyes, domesticated, would like to correspond with a Roman Catholic young man.

ROSE. seventeen, domesticated, good looking, fond of home, loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a young man.

B. B. twenty-two, fair complexion, loving disposition, with good expectations, would like to correspond with a young gentleman of a loving disposition, with a view to matrimony.

ALBERT. a seaman in the Royal Navy, light hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady without money.

M. and A. two friends, wish to correspond with two young gentlemen, lawyers preferred; both must have large fortunes, and of loving dispositions and fond of home. They are tall, considered good looking, and have fortunes of their own.

T. C. a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty,

medium height, fair complexion, hazel eyes, wishes to correspond with a dark complexioned young lady not exceeding twenty, fond of home and of a loving disposition.

BILL LUFF. a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young woman of genial temper, about twenty-one.

ANNIE. twenty-seven, medium height, has a little money, would like to correspond with a gentleman from twenty-seven to thirty-four.

MARK. twenty-nine, medium height, dark, has a little money, would like to correspond with a thoroughly domesticated young lady.

SACRIS NELL. fair, considered good looking, a very good housekeeper, wishes to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy.

HARBRADA. twenty-one, tall, dark, considered good looking, in a good position, wishes to correspond with a young lady, with a view to matrimony.

NUFFE. a stoker in the Royal Navy, thirty-two, medium height, dark complexion, dark hazel eyes, wishes to correspond with a charming young widow between twenty-five and twenty-six, who must be good looking, good tempered, and fond of home, with a view to matrimony.

ETNA and ROSE. two friends, wish to correspond with two young gentlemen friends, between twenty-four and twenty-six. Etta, twenty-one, dark, medium height, good looking. Rose is twenty, medium height, dark, amiable disposition, good looking.

H. W. a seaman in the Royal Navy, medium height, blue eyes, fair complexion, of a loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a young lady of medium height, fond of home and music, and domesticated.

L. P. a seaman in the Royal Navy, rather tall, blue eyes, fair complexion, considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a good looking young lady of medium height, fond of home, and of a loving disposition.

ROBAL-RAIL. a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty, dark, tall, wishes to correspond with a pretty, thoroughly domesticated young lady about nineteen, with a view to matrimony.

HAPPY LOUISE. twenty-one, tall, blue eyes, curly hair, thoroughly domesticated, wishes to correspond with a young man, with a view to matrimony; respondent must be dark, good looking, about her own age, and fond of dancing; a sailor preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

SAM is responded to by—J. H., twenty-one, blue eyes, fair complexion, good looking, rather tall.

LARKINS HARRY. by—Hopkins Lucy, twenty-one, medium height, fair, blue eyes, good tempered, fond of dancing, has a small income, and thinks she is all he requires.

NAT and HARRY. by—Wilful Winnie and Dark-Eyed Nell. Wilful Winnie is seventeen, medium height, fair. Dark-Eyed Nell is eighteen, medium height, dark, considered pretty.

JANE. by—Edward C., twenty-five, rather tall, considered good looking; and by—Tom, tall, dark, fond of music, a clerk by profession.

CECIL. by—Winnie, tall, fair, and thinks she is all he requires.

LIZZIE. by—Harold, nineteen, medium height, affectionate disposition, fond of home, a Good Templar, by profession a clerk in one of Her Majesty's Courts of Record.

L. K. by—Fattie, twenty-one, medium height.

TOM. by—Eliza, nineteen, dark, considered good looking, and thinks she will suit him.

PERSERVERANCE. by—M. M., twenty-eight, has some money and a business of her own.

J. G. P. by—Mary, nineteen, medium height, rather dark.

TOM. by—Mills, twenty-five, who would do all she could to make a home comfortable.

NORA L. by—Hector D.

J. F. H. dark complexion, medium height, good prospects, very talented, and of many appearances, would like to correspond with a young lady between eighteen and twenty, who must be good looking, amiable, and loving.

BOB. twenty-five, medium height, fair complexion, brown hair and eyes, wishes to correspond with a good looking young lady about his own age, with a view to matrimony.

ALL THE BACK NUMBERS, PARTS and VOLUMES of the "LONDON READER" are in print and may be had at the Office, 334, Strand; or will be sent to any part of the United Kingdom Post-free for Three-halfpence, Eightpence, and Five Shillings and Eightpence each.

THE LONDON READER. Post-free, Three-halfpence Weekly; or Quarterly One Shilling and Eightpence.

LIFE and FASHION. Vols. 1 and 2, Price Seven Shillings and Sixpence each.

EVERYBODY'S JOURNAL. Parts 1 to 4, Price Threepence.

Now Ready VOL. XXVI. of THE LONDON READER Price 6d.

Also, the **TITLE and INDEX** to VOL. XXVI., Price One Penny.

NOTICE.—Part 126 (JUNE) Now Ready, Price Sixpence, post-free Eightpence.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

London: Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, W.C. G. A. SMITH.